

Free The Game, Beat the End

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Free The Game, Beat the End

by [goatgoatwasfound](#)

Summary

When a glitch in the game causes some active players in Minecraft have their consciousness get sucked into the game, 50000 people enter a coma. A coma where in they are stuck in a multiplayer based version of Minecraft, and the only way out is to beat the game. But as the weeks pass, and the trapped are slowly dying in the real world, countless pros are being sent into game in hopes helping beat it.

Unluckily, Sapnap was playing at the time of the glitch, and of course as his friend Dream jumped in soon after. However when George tries contacting Mojang to get himself logged into the game, he is refused and denied the access.

So now he has three goals:
Get reunited with his friends
Beat the game
And Free the End

And maybe confess his sprouting feelings for his long time bestfriend-

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

There were no words to describe how George felt at the time.

He looked over the article, reading it over and over again.

There was no way Dream would just jump in like that. Especially without telling him.

Right?

The news headline being 'Famous Minecraft Youtuber Dream, Logs Himself into Minecraft'.

The word Minecraft at this point being used more loosely as those unfamiliar with it would just call it the death game.

It wasn't like they were wrong though so to speak. 2 weeks ago, 50000 unlucky players online at the time, lost consciousness and went into a coma. It took scientists several days to find out through several brain scans that they had in fact been mentally transferred into a version of minecraft.

One of those people was Sapnap.

But by that time 20000 people had already died. And the number was only rising.

The world began to panic. Scientists and coders alike working on ways to find out what was going on with in the game, and how to get everyone out.

But most people had already guessed it.

To survive, don't die.

To get out, beat the game-kill the Enderdragon.

Which confused everyone on how the feat hadn't been achieved yet. It was never truly substantially hard especially for those experienced with game.

Yet people could only watch as the number of deaths climbed higher and higher, until scientists announced the device they had created. A device that could send the recipients brainwaves into the server, and into the death game.

The device that now apparently Dream had used.

Everyone knew Mojang would send in many of the pros to minecraft in hopes of them being able to help beat it, but for some reason it had not once crossed George's mind that Dream would log in too.

He clenched his phone tighter as he scrolled though the article, over and over again.

It had to have been fake, right? A simple article to get the people's attention.

But Dream hadn't answered his calls, nor had he replied to his texts.

George frantically scrolled through Twitter shaking in horror as he saw 'good luck', and 'it'll be okay messages' on his feed.

It couldn't have been true, Dream couldn't have gone in. He scrolled further and further this time twitching as his fingers began using more and more force.

Sapnap was already stuck, he didn't know if he could take Dream getting trapped in there too.

He opened Dream's twitter page unable to comprehend what he read.

'Thank you everyone.' It said in the first tweet.

'And I'm sorry George.' It read in the second.

He sat there silently as his grip on his phone weakened. He stared blankly at the screen, wishing at wishing it was all a dre-

Dream.

George didn't really cry often. He prided himself on that. He could always hold in his tears, and he rarely even found the need to anyways. Plus he didn't want anyone to see him in such a state. But there was no one in the room anyways.

So he cried.

He cried at the fact that his two best friends were stuck in a game. A game where in they could die at any second.

He cried at the fact that he wasn't near them and that he couldn't do anything at all to affect the outcome or stop it.

He cried at that fact that he felt something weird, something strange at the fact that Dream was gone. That he wouldn't be able to hear his stupid laughs and wheezes for who know how long.

So now George had three goals:

Reunite with his friends.

Beat the Game.

Free the End.

And maybe another one he might develop along the way.

Chapter End Notes

Lol basically just a longer version of the summary :)))

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George silently read the emails he received.

He couldn't believe it, at this point he could barely understand any words they were saying. None of it made sense, seemed like a bunch of stupidly put together excuses to him.

"So what'd they say, George?" Bad, asked speaking through teamspeak.

George had been so focused on the emails he had almost forgot Bad was there. He jolted slightly at his name before refocusing his attention on both Bad's question and the email.

It was an email straight from Mojang about his request to be logged into the game.

The request denied.

"A bunch of crap." He answered, evidently frustrated.

Its almost as if both of them could sense Badboyhalo about to yell 'language' but he obviously stopped himself sensing the mood of the situation.

Bad hesitated for a bit before speaking. "What did those muffins say?" He asked his voice full of concern.

George let out a sigh. "I don't know!" He exclaimed, close to yelling. "A bunch of nonsense about my skill not being good enough!" The hurt was evident in his voice as he double checked the email. "Said something about limited devices, and that my constant volunteering is appreciated or some shit."

"Language!" Bad spilled out unable to help it. "But your right, you're literally so good at the game, I don't get why they won't let you in the server."

"Exactly!" George replied. "I just don't understand. The devices are being mass produced, and so many players are being sent in. Even those who aren't that good or whom no one has ever heard of before!" He complained. "It makes no sense why they won't just let me in."

George let out a defeated sigh, scrolling through the minecraft website. The website now featuring a large hall of fame, of all those in the game, all those who had jumped in, and all those who had-

George seemingly swallowed air as he couldn't bear the thought. The thought of his friends dying, just like that, without him. The thought of him losing them, was too much for him to bear.

"Well, I think those muffins should stop being so stubborn." Bad said in agreement.

George just sighed. He scrolled through the website looking under the 'invited' page where in he could see all those who were sent requests to join. "It seems almost every content creator is here but me." George pointed out. "This is so stupid, it's like they're purposely avoiding me."

Bad nodded in agreement, though George couldn't see him.

He scrolled through the 'dead' page, silently paying respects to the usernames of those he saw.

"How long have you been requesting?" Bad questioned. "Two weeks right, since Dream got in?"

George mumbled a yes as he continued to scroll through the page, stopping slightly as he read the name again.

It had been a week since Technoblade had died, yet no one could still comprehend it. Once known as probably the best player in the world, was now gone.

George still couldn't fully register it either, getting worried at the mere thought of that happening to Dream too.

Dream could do it, he could survive.

But so could Technoblade, and there his name stood, in the center of the hall of fame.

George wanted more than anything to be in there. To fight by Dream's side, and stick with him. Knowing he was there without him, made George feel admittedly worse than he should've felt.

Like it was eating away at him, that he was missing something, and that Dream might be too.

George's mood was evidently worsened just thinking about it. "How the hell is every content creator but me here?!" He let out as he forcefully scrolled through.

They had enough devices for all these people but not him-specifically not him.

"Bad, am I just that horrific at minecraft?" He asked with a tinge of sarcasm in his voice.

Bad shook his head, again even though his face cam was off. "Stop thinking like that you little muffin! You're definitely better than they give you credit for."

George felt the need to roll his eyes, though a slight smile formed on his face. He remembered all those times where in Dream would say his skill and PvP were underrated. Those compliments had made him feel a whole better than he would've liked to admit.

"Thanks Bad by the way, for waiting for me to join in." He added, his mood a bit better.

BadBoyHalo had been requested to join in as one of the pros, but decided to hold his response until George got approved too.

"No problem you little muffin. There's no way I'm letting you jump in alone. You might fall off a cliff or something stupid." He joked.

George held in a laugh. "You just told me the didn't give me enough credit,"

"And they didn't really give you much in the first place." He argued back ready to laugh.

George let out a small giggle as he continued to search through the website. He typed in Dream's username and let out a relieved sigh.

He was alive.

It's not like George had thought he had died, he knew he hadn't, but seeing his name lit up like that as pure confirmation just gave him another unique sense of happiness.

Definitely more than it should've.

He clicked on the profile, and noticed a new tab within it.

"Records?" He whispered to himself. Bad heard him though and decided to answer him.

"Yup, I heard the data-miners are getting better info. Apparently we can see their achievements and stuff."

George gave him a sign of acknowledgement, as he looked into Dream's records.

Dream gained the achievement [Monster Hunter].

Dream gained the achievement [Isn't it an Iron Pick?]

Dream gained the achievement [Diamonds!]

He smiled to himself, thankful he could now monitor Dream's success. He relaxed himself leaning back into his chair as he read the records when he noticed something interesting.

He ironically scoffed a bit as he took a closer look. "Bad, how'd Dream gain all this achievements in a day?"

"Hmm, let me look."

George's smile was now a grin as he noted Dream's absurd accomplishments. "I knew he was good, but he was never this good." He joked sarcastically. "I mean I thought they scaled the game differently-"

"What the muffin, in one day!?" Bad almost shouted. "That's impossible!"

George laughed, as he scrolled through it all. Did Dream seriously tame every kind of cat?

He grinned through it all until his heart dropped, and his pulse rose.

He squinted closely to read it again.

Dream was slain by an Enderman.

No, no, no, no.

Dream couldn't have died, George would just be unable to handle it. He wasn't there with him whatsoever.

He wasn't able to say anything to him. No last goodbyes, and no thank you's. George was never able to ask Dream about it either. About the weird feeling he would get in his chest every time Dream would laugh.

George's eyes darted in desperation to his name, but it was still lit up.

Dream was alive.

It said there clearly on the screen that he was slain by an enderman 5 days ago, but his status was lit up in a green that unmistakably stated he was alive.

He squinted carefully at what he saw, unsure if he should be celebrating or panicking.

Because 5 days ago Dream had died.

But Dream wasn't dead.

Chapter End Notes

lol is there a way to italicize bc idfk anything abt this site. I feel like a boomer wth lol.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Thank you guys so much for the support!!! You're comments and kudos are much appreciated and give me so much serotonin and motivation yadayadayada lol tysmmm!!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Respawn.

Dream have to had respawned.

That was the only thing Bad and George could think of, but it still made little to no sense. If you could respawn, then how on earth would people die. If you could respawn, death wouldn't have even been an issue. People die when they are killed.

But for some reason Dream had gotten a second life.

And he wasn't the only one. Multiple players seemingly at random were still alive though the records had shown that they had already died.

George would spend his days glued to the website, checking on random player's records watching how everyone did with in the game.

There were in fact a select few players who were still alive, despite the aforementioned deaths.

But it was rare. Very very rare. And George hadn't a slightest clue on how and what determined it.

If only he could communicate with those with in the game, but many people had already tried it, deeming it to be an impossible feat.

He groaned in annoyance almost ready to throw his phone on a wall. It had been days and they were still denying his request to volunteer.

There was absolutely nothing he could do from here, but watch.

George would keep reminding himself that his friends were fine. They were both pros, well and alive who could take care of themselves. But every so often it would cross his mind.

Dream had died.

He had already died, and from the records he saw barely anyone respawned more than once.

So pained him to think he could do absolutely nothing but watch and hope. George had to get into the game, no matter what he had to.

He just didn't know how he was going to accomplish that.

He needed access to the device that would transmit his brain waves into the server, but it seems Mojang wouldn't budge.

That was when he noticed a tweet.

A tweet from none other than DanTDM himself.

And so he was going to do something very very stupid.

A day later George pulled over to what he assumed was Dan's house.

As an experienced programmer and coder he was able to determine his address through tons of research.

Most would call it stalking-but he had no time to think about that now.

He got out of the car, making his way toward the doorstep and rang the doorbell, recalling the plan in his head.

Dan had been offered an invitation into the game, but George knew he wasn't going to take it. Why?

He had a son.

The door opened and the famous Youtuber stepped out examining George. He just stood there awkwardly letting out a cautious laugh.

"Uhm, excuse me do I know you?" He asked.

George cursed under his breath. This would have definitely been a lot easier if he was recognized immediately but he would have to make do.

"I'm not sure if you've heard of me, but I'm George, GeorgeNotFound."

It seemed something clicked in Dan's mind as he eyed him. "Oh, yes I've heard of you. What are you doing here, and wait how did you know where I lived?!"

George ignored his question, chuckling awkwardly. "I want to take your place." He announced.

There was no context in his statement, but both knew exactly what he meant. Still Dan was unsure. "In?"

"Minecraft." George answered bluntly. He would normally dance around the topic more, but this was his one and only shot.

George bit his lip as Dan invited him in his house, hoping this wouldn't fail. He was never the biggest fan of talking to people he wasn't close to or didn't know either.

Dan's house was pretty big to put it lightly. He was one of the highest earning Youtubers out there so it didn't surprise him, just made him slightly more nervous.

Dan's tweet was basically announcing his invitation, and asking his fans whether or not he should join, and opinions were mixed.

Some wanted to assure his safety and others wanted him to join the fight. As a huge figure in the community his presence there would likely add more hope into the situation, but joining a game of death wasn't that easy.

But Dan was such a famous figure in the community. He had a device ready for him whenever and if ever he decided he wanted to go.

But he had people who needed him here, in the real world, and George had someone he need to get to in there. Which was why, to George this made perfect sense to him.

They both sat down across each other in Dan's living room, both staying quiet for a bit as George quickly went through what he was going to say and Dan reviewed the situation. "Why do you need to take my place?" Dan suddenly asked. "Surely you have your own slot right?"

"Mojang keeps making weird excuses about my being there." George said. "They don't want me in the game for some reason."

"Are you sure it isn't just skill?"

He winced at the half-insult. "No, I would say I'm definitely above average at the game." George argued. He could feel his hand shaking slightly. "But they are still denying my continuous requests."

"Then I'm sorry I don't think there's anything I can do." Dan said, which only made George flinch. "How do you even know I'm not going to use my slot."

"Because you have people here, just like I do in there!" George said, voice more full of conviction. "I need to get in, I can't just keep sitting here-"

Dan just eyed him, unable to come up with anything to say. He was only a few years older than George, and could clearly understand what he was going through.

"I know you feel guilty," George then spilled out. "You feel guilty that your unable to help in a situation like this, so let me do it!" He yelled. "I can go in your place, as my own decision, and I'll do what you can't-"

Dan paused looking at him. His eyes full of desperation, almost like a child would be.

"You would get the chance to help me, and everyone else, sending me in. I'll find my friends, and I promise I'll go in there and beat the game!" George claimed.

"You do know once you go in you can't go back out until the game is beaten right?" Dan reminded in an attempt to sway him.

George gave a quick nod.

It was an absurd claim to say he could beat the game, a stupidly difficult claim. But Dan saw something in his eyes. The same thing he saw when he first looked at his wife, and that's when it clicked.

George was chasing something, something he didn't even know he was chasing.

Dan caved in with a sigh.

"Tomorrow, meet me at the London Hospital, Let's get you in the server."

I chose DanTDM for his role mainly because one he had a son sort recentlyish and two he was my childhood and i kinda wanted to give him a cameo and mention lol.

Bc this story is in a multiplayer version of minecraft i wanted to take advantage of that by adding a lot of different youtubers as mini side characters, but the Dream Team+BBH (Specifically Dream and George) will stay as the mains. You guys can request ytbers if you want, but I can't guarantee including them as I'll put the ones I know so I'll be able to portray their personalities.

So whether you like it or not Dan wont be playing a big role, and will prob only be here for the next chap. Expect to see a certain 16 year old bed wars player make an appearance soon too.

Also this story will probably stretch on to a lot more semi-long chapters I guess, mostly depends.

Pls give me feed back on the characterization and their personalities if they are accurate.

also hehe i can italicize now

-Holy crap this end note was long wtf-

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George took a deep breath as he waited for Dan to show up.

Bad was already at his local hospital, and if all went well he should already be in game.

The plan was for Bad to jump in first and for George to get in only a few hours after at most, that way they wouldn't be separated for very long within the server.

George tensed up as he waited. A part of him was optimistic, thrilled that he would finally get to reunite and see his best friend again, but a part of him was full of worry. Dream himself had died with in the game, and countless others had too, and now a part of George was in doubt.

What if Mojang didn't want George in the server because he actually was just that bad at the game. It was a thought that came a bit to late.

George slouched back further into his chair. Now was definitely not the time to be worrying about stuff like that.

From the corner of his eye he noticed vibrant blue hair and walked over to greet him.

Dan took notice of him and waved up a hand. "Hey man, you ready?"

George gave him a smile, and a semi-determined nod. "I mean I better be." He replied. He took a quick glance at the clock. 3 pm, Bad should've logged in about two hours ago.

When he looked back at Dan, he was already speaking to the counter to ready the device.

Reminder to self: thank this man with all your heart.

"Yes, my name is Dan Middleton." He said as he reached out to grab the paper he had to sign. To avoid legal issues he slid it under the table to have George sign it instead. He did, and as inconspicuously as possible handed it back to him.

George's heart was now beating faster than he would've liked it to have, as the attendant gave him a questioning look.

"Excuse me, but may I ask who this is?"

Dan just played it off like how they agreed to. "Oh, he's my *nephew*, wanted to come with me to see me off."

George cringed a little at the word nephew. He would much have rather chosen the word friend, but they both knew that though the age difference was 5 years, George looked a whole lot younger than Dan and they couldn't risk arising suspicion.

The attendant politely nodded as she escorted them both to the room they needed. They walked through a long hallway in a very specific part of the hospital.

Each room they passed contained a victim of the glitch. Each room they passed contained a life which could fade away at any moment.

The fact that George was soon to be apart of that group, began to frighten him.

The attendant then stopped leading them both in Dan's intended room. It was fairly big, and completely white, with a pretty large bed for hospital standards situated in the middle. Next to it lied the device, helmet like, but attached to an absurd amount of wires. The layout was obviously designed differently for those who were only victims, and for those willingly logged in.

George studied it as much as he could with in the given time. Glancing at the nearby computer in order to see how the code should work and which should be connected to what.

The machine looked complicated. George tried as much as possible to not have too many expectations about it as to not arise disappointment or panic.

This it was certainly going to be difficult.

"Please ready up the machine." Dan said, as the nurses and doctors went to work.

George needed to observe what they were doing to learn the exact coding of the device, if not there was a high likelihood he would just glitch out or remain in Dan's account.

He had done tons of research on the device, though not much about it was even put up online. He'd have to rely mostly on his knowledge and instinct, which he was slowly doubting by the second.

When the doctors had it all set up, they looked up at Dan. "Okay, please lie down here."

He nodded stepping onto the bed. It was easier to put on than they had both expected, just slid on like a helmet, so when George gave Dan the go signal he spoke.

"I just want to speak to my nephew privately first please." He requested.

The doctors looked at each other nodding. "Alright you have 5 minutes." The head confirmed as they left.

So now George felt like he was about to have a heart attack.

Dan scrambled out of the machine, as George frantically looked through the devices code, switching things like the account name, password and skin.

"Skin, how would that even work?" George questioned himself in a whisper. He felt his hands shaking, careful not to make a typo.

A typo could cost him his life.

And Dan took several pictures of the machine so he could put George in it. George took a deep breath as he finished altering the code.

"Okay, its done." He announced running towards the bed. He jumped in observing the wires.

It worked by stimulating the wearer's consciousness into the game, meaning he would likely be able to fear and experience pain.

He tensed up, remembering the electric shock challenge he did a while back. George was definitely not very pain tolerant.

They both glanced at the clock.

Two minutes, they had two minutes.

Dan gave the device to George as he shoved it on, while taking second glances at his code. He took a deep breath. If he was going to doubt himself he should have done it weeks ago.

He watched as Dan looked through the controls. "That's the power button by the way." George pointed out.

Dan nodded, a slight smile making his way to his face, seemingly amused by George's what?

Stubbornness.

Stupidity.

Perhaps you could call it determination.

"You sure about this?" He said finalizing the last switches.

George's face didn't falter though, as he let out a deep breath. "Yeah, I am." He confirmed. A part of him contemplated asking Dan if he was sure too, because sending George in instead could potentially pose a lot of implications for him.

But he couldn't afford Dan second guessing his choice, choosing to be slightly selfish, he decided against it.

"Thanks by the way." George sighed as he closed his eyes, ready to be transported.

"Your welcome." Dan answered. "And, good luck."

"Thanks again." George said getting a bit more comfortable. His thoughts wandering off to the mysteries of the game and what was in it, his pulse increasing slightly at the thought of seeing-

"Who is it?" Dan blurted out, unable to handle his curiosity.

George tensed up again, not noticing the blush forming on his face. "W-what do you mean?" George said in a stutter. "Who's what?"

Dan shook his head holding in a smile of amusement. "Never mind," He shrugged with a laugh. just please don't die."

George let out a giggle. "I won't."

And as the doors burst open and the doctors and nurses flooded into the room in panic, George closed his eyes again for the final time, laughing to himself.

Who is it?

What a stupid question.

It's no one.

No one at all.

Except maybe -just maybe- it was the silly green blob that found his way into George's Dreams.

Just maybe.

Chapter End Notes

I do not know for how long I can keep up these daily updates lol, schools starting soon so it might be a little tough. Anyways Gogy is finally in and the plot will finally, hopefully be picking up.

Also would anyone be interested in a DNF Hogwarts AU where George accidentally drinks a mild love potion??? Just asking-

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Bye Bye daily updates, Ill miss you :(((

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream ran.

He ran as fast as he could and jumped head first back into the portal.

3 hearts was far too close for comfort.

And as soon as he got out, he sighed, leaning back onto the cobblestone wall beside him, Sapnap there waiting for him.

"You good bro?" Sapnap asked, voice full of concern.

Dream just brushed him off lifting up his white smiley faced mask ever so slightly to eat to steak and regenerate some health. "Yeah, but still no fortress." He sighed. Dream opened his menu to check his inventory. His helmet had broke, and the rest of his gear had lost practically all of its durability. "Damn it, and I'll need new armor too."

Sapnap sighed, draping an arm over his friends shoulder. "You'll also need a break idiot." He scolded. "We already sent out a bunch of scouts, you should just stay here and rest."

Dream scoffed at his request. He had a hard time relying on people he didn't know, and with their progress constantly being slowed down, 'staying here to rest' didn't seem like the best option.

This version of minecraft was scaled differently after all , everything being essentially just way harder than it should be, and drops being insanely rarer.

But this was still minecraft, and Dream was confident enough in his skill and ability that he would be able to beat it.

He just needed time, people, and resources. All of which he was severely lacking.

He wanted to argue with Sapnap about the resting, but could already tell he would lose. Regeneration worked differently in this server, and Dream had just spent three consecutive days in the nether.

As much as he would hate to admit, Sapnap was right, Dream needed rest.

They ventured out of their base's portal room. It was located underground so they both caught up a bit as they resurfaced.

"I swear if all of this had happened before 1.16 we would've beaten the game by now!" Dream claimed, and Sapnap just silently agreed. "Also our seed actually sucks! You have no clue how many stupid bastions we've found already."

"Dude chill," Sapnap said, earning an eyeroll from Dream. Though it wouldn't have even been visible through the mask. "It'll be fine, besides the rest of the team here's been working crazy hard. We got so much iron yesterday."

"When you say 'so much' it always tends to be an exaggeration." Dream quipped, as they made their way back onto the surface. "I bet you guys only got 4 or 5 stacks."

Sapnap let out a slightly embarrassed chuckle as Dream whispered "I knew it." under his breath. In a regular game of minecraft it would have certainly be considered a lot, but with a team this big, it would only be enough armor for a few people.

They walked out into their base watching as people, or referred to as players here, rushed from here to their doing their respective tasks.

Their base, entrance hidden behind a waterfall, was fortified by large walls and a few iron golems here and there. It was situated seemingly right in the middle of a valley with a small river flowing through it. The many houses and shops weren't particularly good looking, but they served their purposes right, all of it connected by a large intricate path way of cobblestone (it was the cheapest non-flammable material after all).

The boys walked into the blacksmiths and were greeted by a friendly laugh. "Dream, how the hell'd you break your armor again?" Greeted their good friend Callahan.

They both took a seat by the counter, and Dream almost collapsed, still exhausted from the long journey

"Skeletons in the soul sand valley." He replied. "Any chance you can get soul speed on the new boots too?" He said as he handed Callahan the old gear.

He nodded his head. "It's valuable though, so make sure you don't die with it." He said walking towards the anvil.

"Oh trust me Dream is way more valuable than a stupid pair of boots." Sapnap said, making Dream smirk under his mask. "Though of course I'm even more important both both of those things combined."

Dream's face then changed into a playful frown and he lightly punched Sapnap. "Oh shut up, Simpnep."

Callahan laughed, and they both laughed with him. Still it was hard to take Callahan seriously with his ridiculous skin, a weird man in an animal suit, with a superhero mask and clown nose.

Thinking about that made Dream silently thankful, that when the game rendered his skin, they put his real self in the game with a mask on, rather than make him a green blob. He wouldn't have been able to live like that for that many months.

Months.

He hasn't seen George in months.

"It should only be a few weeks in the real world," Dream blurted out, thinking aloud.

Sapnap and Callhan both exchanged weird looks. "A little off topic, but yeah." Sapnap said, causing Dream to stiffly laugh.

"I didn't realize I was talking." He explained taking in a deep breath.

The silence that followed after was only slightly awkward, but was broken when a young girl wearing a black face mask and hoodie stepped out from behind the counter running up to them. "Sorry guys, we're out of Soul Speed books." She announced.

"It's fine Alyssa," Callahan said. "Dream, they should have some at the enchanters, go get some."

"Wow, I just came back from such a long journey and your already handing out tasks." He remarked. He stood up from his seat as he made his way out of the shop. "You sure I don't have to pay?"

They all laughed, knowing that wasn't the case. Not only were they friends, but them, and everyone around them was working towards the same goal.

Beat the Game; Free the End.

Though obviously not everyone could be fighting and killing mobs. For one, not everyone had the skill, and some others just weren't ready to take the risk.

The risk of dying.

Dream walked out of the store, quickly taking a glimpse of the world around him. Blocky for sure, after all it was minecraft, but with a touch of realism that made it feel like real life.

Players looked humanoid rather than block-like too, thankfully.

He smiled to himself as he watched players farm and cook food, while some others worked on fortifying the base, and mining. He watched as children, as young as 10 ran around, playing with their friends, and collected items, transporting them from one place to another.

It was so unfair.

Life was so unfair that mere children were stuck in a game where in they could die at any minute.

Dream unconsciously clenched his fists as he thought about it all. Those children might have even been considered lucky to some, as countless others had already died.

A young boy then ran up to Dream holding a cooked salmon in his hands. "Dream, Dream look I just gained a new achievement!"

He smiled at the kid. "Alright then, let's go check it out." Dream replied, seemingly tapping the air in order to open the chat menu. He looked through a few messages before coming across the boy's achievement. "Congrats kid!"

The boy smiled running off, fish in hands leaving Dream there to chuckle, as he averted his gaze back to his now open chat menu.

He had gotten a lot better seeing through his mask, it not even being a slight issue to him. He browsed through the chat reading the player's achievements, and paying silent respects to the deaths, until one name had caught his eye.

Dream felt his body physically come to a stop as he saw it.

He had to read it over and over again, unable to believe what he was seeing, his heart dropping in a panic as the realization hit him.

GeorgeNotFound joined the game.

And he would be dead in a few days if he didn't do something about it.

Chapter End Notes

Here's a chapter from Dreams POV, I swear we will be back at Gogy after this lol. Also we hit 100 Kudos, Thank you so much you guys are amazing!!

If all doesn't go crazy I should keep an update sched of every 1-2 days *Hopefully*, cause schools starting lol.

Its also worldbuilding time so let me know also if so far its ok, ive never been to confident in my ability to do descriptive writing ://

And since you guys liked the idea so much, I'll start formulating a plot for the Hogwarts AU and Im really excited for it.

OKOK One more thing, if I do small edits it wont notify you guys right?? Cause I edited like the tags yest and I hope it didn't notify cause that would be annoying. Im pretty new to ao3

oki dats all bye

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

A prison cell.

George had spawned in a large 100 by 100 block prison cell.

"What the fuck." He whispered to himself, looking around.

It was made entirely out of stone brick with the exception of one wall with a few iron bars placed as windows, and the singular iron door as the exit. The place was horribly kept, cobwebs seemingly everywhere, without any chairs, beds or excess blocks.

It was just a plain, empty, dirty prison cell.

Certainly not was George was expecting to see when he logged into minecraft.

George frowned, but slowly took better notice of what was around him. At the bottom of his vision he could see his health, hunger, and an empty hotbar.

He himself was wearing his signature clout goggles, and sky blue shirt, with the Supreme logo instead reading 'GeorgeNotFound'. He was amused to find out he had basically spawned into the game wearing his own merch.

"Language!" called out a familiar voice. George turned around to face Bad, who was wearing a dark black hoodie and pants that completely covered his face, akin to his minecraft skin.

A quick relief filled George as he saw a familiar face, but was soon filled with panic as he grabbed both Bad's shoulders. "Bad, where the hell are we?!" He yelled.

George couldn't see through the darkness of Bad's hoodie the facial expression he made. "How would I know?" He replied gently pushing George away. "I'm just as confused as you are."

George bit his lip as he looked around him. There were a two other people in the cell with him, excluding bad.

One guy, stepped forward, he wore a big purple hoodie leaving his light blonde hair and blue eyes exposed. He was a certainly younger than them, looking to be in his mid-teens. "I'm pretty sure we're in some weird jail cell." He explained. "There's lava surrounding the whole thing so we wouldn't even be able to get out of here if we tried."

George's brows furrowed slightly as he processed the information while Bad went for the introductions. "Hey, I've heard your voice before, I'm BadBoyHalo." He said, extending out a hand.

The kid chuckled, pointing over his head. "We have name tags, so I can kinda tell already." He informed. George jolted up slightly at the information as he read the kid's name, 'Purpled'.

George's face lit up as he remembered what Dream had said about him before. From what he knew Purpled was a very skilled solo bedwars player.

"Hey, I remember you!" He suddenly said. "You're uhm- Pro water person!"

Purpled gave off a laugh. "I guess you call me that." He replied. "And you're George from Dream right?"

George returned a playful smirk. "Pfft... never heard of a George from Dream." He joked. "I'm GeorgeNotFound thank you."

They both laughed a bit, as Purpled gestured them both towards one of the iron windows. George from the corner of his eye could see the bubbling lava. "That's the lava." Purpled confirmed, just repeating the thoughts in George's head.

"Fall in there and you're dead." Spoke another voice from the corner of the room. It was a deeper voice, one that George was unfamiliar with. "Not like we could jump over it anyways, not without blocks."

Bad and George exchanged looks as they looked at the man, his skin being that of a simple Steve. He seemed so completely and utterly hopeless with himself as he slouched back onto the floor, his hair a complete mess, and his broken facial expression almost out of a horror movie.

It was such a pitiful sight.

"It'll be the ninth day again tomorrow, they're going to take someone out." He continued on his ramble. "And it's going to be me, I'm going to die-" He said, with an almost inhumane tone. He let out a chilling laugh, as Bad and George exchanged weird looks.

"Who's they?" George asked, only to be met with the man's continuous laughter. Judging by his skin he wasn't a pro being sent into the game, and rather just another victim of the glitch. "Who is 'they'." George repeated, only to be met with a silence.

He groaned in annoyance. This Steve man was being extremely uncooperative.

"Purpled, how long have you been here." Bad asked in an attempt to curb the awkwardness of the situation.

Purpled took a step back, obviously uncomfortable at the sight. "A few days." He answered, but his eyes unable to leave the victim. "First time that guy talked this whole time though."

George was beginning to grow impatient as he watched the man in front of him slowly go insane. "Fine, what are they going to do you then?" He asked, hoping changing the topic would net him slightly better answers.

The three boys stood still as they waited for his answer before he spoke again.

"Enderman bait."

George's expression switched into one of terror as he registered those words.

"What the muffin even is that." Bad asked, not getting a response from the Steve. George tried to read his username, but no name tags were popping up. He assumed sitting in this game worked like shifting, and that it hid usernames.

"I'm just gonna assume not something very good," Purpled said taking another glance at the large lava lake outside. Past it was a large green forest that seemed to stretch for thousands of blocks. "And I kinda wanna get out of here before we find out."

Bad agreed, but frowned looking at the moat through the bars. "But this thing's like 10 blocks wide

we can't jump that!"

George walked past them, ignoring their conversation, instead focusing on the iron door in front of him. He walked towards it and leaned in to take a peak through the window like holes, but the moment he was close to getting a glimpse of what was past it, a hand was suddenly slammed unto the door covering his vision. He squinted his eyes, making out a name tag past the wall.

There were players outside waiting for them.

Players who were enemies with a purpose of using them as 'Enderman bait'.

George ran back towards the two, still conversing about how to get past the lava, whisper-screaming. "Shut up, you too."

"Excuse me you little muffin, I'll have you know we're trying to be producti-" Bad stopped in his words as George did a few hand gestures towards the iron door, and the barely visible name tag.

"How did I not see that?" Purpled said hushing his voice. "Looks like front door is definitely not an option."

The took a look around once more, noticing name tags in every direction around them but one.

Over the lava, the only way out that was void of players.

George bit his lip in frustration, instinctively looking over to the Steve who just stayed silent the whole time.

And as Bad and Purpled continued to chat about how they would somehow get over the lava, a thought popped up in Georges mind.

What would Dream do?

He laughed to himself at the thought. Why would it matter to him? He'd just argue with Snapmap, that's what Dream would do.

He let out a small giggle again, remembering all the trio's stupid arguments.

Dream could get out of this, George just knew it, in fact he probably already did. Meaning it was possible, and there was in fact a way out.

He cursed under his breath as he walked straight into a cobweb, trying his best to worm himself out of it, he grabbed the webs with his hands, struggling to get free.

This prison cell really was just filthy.

"These fucking cobwebs." He muttered out earning another loud 'Language' from Bad. He rolled his eyes, with a laugh as he finally stepped out, glancing at what he was holding and the new item that appeared on his hotbar.

That's when he realized they were forgetting one crucial thing; this was minecraft.

4 string made wool. And wool was blocks.

And blocks was a way out of this stupid prison cell.

George took a quick look around, and with the sheer size of the cell there were certainly enough

webs.

George smiled to himself, as the two boys bickered in front him when the question passed his mind again.

What would Dream do?

He almost felt like rolling his eyes at the stupid thought. Why should it even matter to himself in the slightest, yet he found himself smiling as he explored it.

Probably something smarter. Something easier and something way more convenient than anything he could have thought of.

But George wasn't Dream. And that was okay.

After all George never wanted to be Dream. That was not something that ever crossed his mind.

He only wanted to laugh with him and joke around with him.

He only wanted to be near him and reunite with him.

He only wanted to admire his ingenuity and talent from a far.

That's all he wanted.

Nothing more and nothing less.

But there was a certain tug in his heart whispering to him that he wanted something else, something more.

He just didn't know what it was yet.

Chapter End Notes

If anyone has any suggestions for new tags for this fic pls let me know, like anything that's fitting!

Also pls help me sort Technoblade into a Hogwarts house (and maybe suggest other ytber's and their houses too). The four muffintees have already been sorted lol.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

They had a very simple plan.

Get string, make wool, break open a hole, and bridge out.

But it wasn't really going the way they hoped it would. "Guys, I'm stuck again!" Bad called out causing George to let out an annoyed groan.

The other two rushed over towards him, forcefully ripping off the cobwebs as George collected the string.

Luckily for them, because of how the game was altered slightly to add more features and realism to it, string could be collected without a sword. It only required strength, energy, and patience.

All of which they were severely lacking.

"Ugh, this stupid web is getting stuck to my hand!" George complained almost in a scream. "Get this stupid thing off of me." He began failing around his arm causing both Purpled and Bad to laugh.

"I think maybe if you, you know, keep it in one place, you might have a better chance at that." Purpled remarked, causing George to playfully roll his eyes.

They carefully worked on collecting the string, not bothering to hush their voices from the guard-like players outside. From their point of view it would only look like three idiots cleaning up a prison cell- basically doing their job for them.

George couldn't help but take periodic glances at the now almost dead-like Steve man, who was now only facing the corner. He didn't bother helping them, calling their efforts useless, but from what George knew he wasn't even listening as they whispered to each other about the plan, meaning from his view it looked similar to that of how the prison guards saw them.

Still, he was being completely and utterly useless, looking like a life-less shell of a human being.

George wondered if that was what the game did to people, but he definitely wasn't willing to wait long enough to find out.

"Oh yeah, George did something happen back in the real world?" Bad asked, bringing George out of his thoughts.

The Brit gave him a confused look. "What do you mean?"

"What do you mean, 'what do you mean?!'" Bad asked, jokingly exaggerating his anger. "I sat here waiting for literally like 14 hours for you. Thought you guys got caught or something?!"

George now looked even more confused because from what he could recall the plan with Dan was completely successful. "Maybe you entered early or something, I don't know, that's pretty weird."

"I did not!"

The two bickered for a little while longer before being interrupted by a familiar deep voice.

"Time goes faster in here idiots." Spoke the Steve. The trio all averted their eyes on him waiting for further explanation but got no further response, as he slouched back in his corner. Throughout the few hours he has been here, George had learned to just ignore him.

"Did you guys not talk at all while waiting for me?" George asked, as Purpled shook his head.

"Nah, this guy just kept looking at the floor, arms crossed. He looked like some kind of weird plotting murderer." Purpled explained. "I thought if I went closer he'd just stab me or something."

"Well, that was the plan George and I agreed on. I wouldn't make contact with anyone who might be an enemy!" Bad responded like it was the most obvious thing in the world. Purpled stifled in a laughter as he took another look at Bad. "What's so funny?"

"It's just-" Purpled held his chuckles. "I thought you were either mute, emo, or just really edgy!"

George's laughter followed suit, erupting in spurs of hysterics and giggles. He could almost imagine his friends laughing along with them, Sapnap adding something to make fun of Bad, and Dream wheezing like he always would.

Dream really wouldn't leave George's thoughts, would he?

No one could see Bad's flustered face through the darkness of his hoodie, but they could certainly hear it from his voice. "What makes you think *I'm* edgy?!"

"I mean you do have Bad in your name." Purpled argued, causing Bad to impishly cross his arms in a huff. "And your skin does seem pretty edgy at first glance."

"It literally does not!" Bad fought back.

And as the trio's laughter and bickers began to fill the room, George felt himself yearning to hear that unmistakable wheeze again.

Dream's stupid laugh.

Why did everything have to be Dream?

It was almost sunset by the time they had gathered enough string, and they desperately wanted to get out before night hit.

According to Purpled, he had heard mob noises the nights before and without armor or tools, fighting them would have been a lost cause.

So they all went to work.

George trying to figure out how to craft, while Bad and Purpled chipped away at the wall, taking one block each.

George opened his inventory via the holographic like buttons in the air opening a crafting tab in front of him. It showed them a two by two collection of squares as he grabbed the string from his hotbar filling up all the vacant spots in the square. The string then merged together creating a block of wool in front of him.

George smirked.

This was minecraft. Crafting was easy.

And he began placing the string in, one by one, creating blocks and blocks of wool as they seemingly disappeared when he put them in his inventory.

He had 10 blocks. That was just enough.

"Guys, the crafting is done!" George called out in a whisper. Bad nodded, while Purpled seemed to be in a slight panic, looking back at George and sending him a signal of such.

"By the way George, it's kind of your fault I'm here." He suddenly said, keeping his eyes on the task in front of him.

"Hm, why is that?" George asked, playing along.

Purpled chuckled a bit. "Because I heard of how stubborn you were." He explained. "I'm really young, so Mojang didn't want to let me in, but I kinda wanted to not just sit around you know. Then I heard about you, the idiot who wouldn't stop sending requests to them and I thought, it wouldn't be as embarrassing if I was only the second most annoying player." He smiled. "So I kept bugging them until they let me in. I didn't have to sneak in like you though."

A smile appeared on George's face as both Purpled and Bad's blocks broke. He knew Purpled only said that because the breaking of the stone walls was making too much noise and they needed to cover it up, but a part of him was touched that he made a simple impact in his choice.

George threw him the blocks as Purpled smirked when he picked up, taking a quick glance at the lava below him. "Of course that means if I die, I can blame it on you." He quipped, causing George to take back all he thought about being 'touched'.

Because Purpled was the most experienced in bridging out of all them, they decided to leave it up to him. The teen focused, gripping unto the blocks and quickly bridging across, as George could only anxiously watch.

Fail, and he died.

Purpled bridged over, being extra careful. It was the first time in this game he was placing blocks, so it felt weird, but another part of it just felt natural. It really was Minecraft.

The group didn't take their eyes off of him, keeping in their comments to themselves in order allow him to concentrate.

George let out a deep breath as he looked at the newly bridge in front of him.

He didn't fail.

Purpled's face flooded with relief, gesturing for them to come over.

And they did, trying their best not to make any suspecting noise as they reached the forest on the other. George and Purpled were already ready to make a run for it before Bad couldn't keep it in and screamed out. "Hey Steve! You little muffin come with us."

The man looked up, surprised as he took notice of the bridge. He stood up, slowly walking towards them. So slowly in fact, George could feel the panic rise as he heard the other players, run around,

screaming orders out to one another.

"Bad, we have to go, we have to run! They heard us!" He said, as Bad eyed the player in front of them.

They had to run. They needed to leave before it got dark, and before the enemies, both players and mobs arrived.

The iron doors bust open through the cell, as the players, decked in full iron armor, came running towards them, headed for the bridge.

The Steve walked over just standing on the middle of the connection between the cell and the forest, breaking the wool in front of him, stopping him from getting any nearer to the other end.

The Steve was breaking his only escape route, stopping the enemies from reaching them.

"Hey, wait what the fuck are you doing?!" George yelled, only to be ignored by the man, a chilling smile across his face.

"As long as it's not enderman bait." He said under his breath, watching as the players ran towards him, silently accepting his death. For a split second he turned around making eye-contact with George for the first time. George stared, almost feeling the pain the man had went through. "Free the Game." He mouthed as pushed the players into the lava, off of the one-by-one bridge.

The Steve had acted as their distraction, acting as a barrier between them and the enemy players on the other end.

But he was going to die for it, and something told George he wasn't going to respawn.

He continued to watch in horror, as Bad pulled him away, unable to bear the sight. "You're right, we have to go now." He said, the fear evident in his voice as he looked away. Purpled was the same, the reality of their situation sinking in.

George nodded as the three booked it through the forest.

They had no food.

No tools.

No armor.

And the day was slowly ending as they ran.

But they were going to survive.

They had to.

Only they were slowly doubting their chances as they saw two name tags of players clad in full armor on horses running towards them from the depths of the forest. One of them with a bow aimed at George's head.

The 14 hours thing wasn't even on purpose I did the math and its actually supposed to be 14 AHHAHSHAH-

Also i have major trust issues with Dream after the troll last night lol. Dream and Techno are teaming for MCC and I can't believe it, I went crazy last night.

Last thing is Techno Gryfinndor or Slytherin?? Its for the HP au lol

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

FORGOT TO MENTION; when i planned this out a while back it was before the wilbur pizza date, so Gogy hasn't seen Dream's face yet :P

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Dream, are you sure you read that correctly?" Sapnap asked again, seemingly for the hundredth time that day, causing Dream to roll his eyes.

Dream still kept his focus and view ahead they galloped side by side on horses heading towards the spawn point. "Yes, yes, I did." He replied, trying not to sound too annoyed.

The moment he read the message he began to panic, telling Sapnap to rush and have people ready their horses.

If he didn't hurry, there was a chance George could be killed.

Killed by the same people who killed Technoblade.

Dream winced at the thought, tightening his mask and pushing his horse to gallop faster, when he spotted a few name tags in the distance.

"Sapnap, enemies!" Dream called out, bringing out his bow, and Sapnap nodded, pulling out an axe and rushing towards them.

Dream grunted in annoyance. He needed to get to spawn as soon as possible, and wasn't particularly fond of having to deal with people on the way.

From what he could see they weren't even wearing armor, confusing Dream at the possibility of a trap.

He aimed his bow, straight at one of their heads. He'd kill them, he'd make it quick.

But his shot missed, and hit the player in his leg, gaining him a loud high pitched scream from the other end.

One that sounded far too familiar to Dream.

He squinted through his mask, flooded with both relief and guilt as he read the name tag.

"G-george?" Dream whispered, meaning to yell but it came out with his voice soft and full of uncertainty. No one heard him, Sapnap switching to his bow, and Purpled barricading off a wounded George.

Dream got off of his horse running towards the trio in front of him. "George!" He called out again, this time in an actual yell, causing everyone around him to look towards Dream in surprise.

George, shot up at the mention of his name, immediately recognizing the voice.

Dream's voice.

"Wait what!?" Sapnap said, withdrawing his weapon and squinting at the names. "What the hell, it's George! A-and Bad too!"

Bad ran out from behind the tree he had been getting wood from (in hopes of quickly crafting a sword to fight back). "Oh my God, it's you muffins!"

They ran towards each other Bad giving both Dream and Sapnap a big hug, their relieved smiles showing on their faces.

George was barely able to stand up, limping due to the arrow in his leg. Yet that wasn't even the main thing on his mind, as he saw his friends in front of them.

He did it. He found them.

Or they had found him rather.

He felt himself run out of breath, slowly, painfully gripping unto some blocks. Dream heard him, and quickly turned around to run towards the Brit, grabbing his hands as a way for George to to balance.

"I'm so sorry George!" He said wincing as he took a closer look at the wound. It was a deep and powerful shot, and Dream cursed himself for being so good with the bow.

But George didn't respond, as he seemingly clinged onto Dream for dear life. He had forgotten the fact that he had never seen Dream before, and here he was standing right in front of him, his arm out for George to hold and maintain his balance. "George are you okay?" Sapnap asked, but it came without a response.

Dream was really tall.

That was all George could think about at the moment. The fact that his friend was actually right there.

George kept his eyes on Dream, seemingly dazed by his mask, wanting to pull it off, and see what was behind it.

What would Dream's eyes look like?

He heard it was a bright shade of green. George couldn't even see green, but he so desperately wanted to see behind that mask of his.

"George what the hell say something!" Dream yelled, bringing George out of his gaze and back to reality.

George took a look at his surroundings again. "Wha- Dream?!" He yelled in complete and utter shock. "What the fuck was I doing?"

Dream began to laugh, his chuckles and wheezes starting to shine through, forcing George to hold in his smile and feign a pout.

Dream's stupid laugh.

George missed Dream's laugh.

"You and Dream were looking at each other like you guys were getting married!" Sapnap yelled, causing George to stumble back, flustered.

"No we were not! I-I'm sleep deprived okay-" He argued back, causing Sapnap to lightly back off with a laugh. "I just zoned out."

Dream's wheeze didn't stop though, as the rest of the group followed, letting the atmosphere fill the air.

They settled into a cave, Sapnap crafting and placing down a campfire for them, as Dream distributed out some steak.

They hadn't realized how awful their hunger situation was, with Purpled not being able to sprint, and Bad being down 3 hearts from fall damage he took while running.

Bad 'introduced' the group to Purpled, but Dream had already talked and collaborated with him, and Sapnap had already heard of the kid.

They sat around the fire, as they discussed about how they got out of the cell, and about George's troubles getting into the game, causing Dream and Sapnap to laugh.

They didn't say the part about George sneaking in though, thinking it was best to leave out parts where he could get into serious trouble.

But George was barely listening to the conversation, thinking about how the hell he'd zoned out like that.

More specifically *why*.

He hadn't realized he was doing the same thing again, until Dream brought him out of his thoughts.

"Hey George, does that hurt?" Dream asked him suddenly.

He felt the eyes of the entire group on him as he hugged his leg tighter, biting his lip out of embarrassment. "A bit." He admitted, causing Dream to stand up, reaching out his hand.

"I'll wrap it up with leaves, let's go outside." Dream suggested as George gave him a nod and took his hand.

They both walked toward a nearby tree, George using Dream's arm as his crutches. He let go as he plopped down by the nearby tree and Dream reached up to gather some leaves.

"It works better with paper but I didn't bring any." Dream explained as he grabbed the leaves from up the tree. "Doesn't exactly speed up the healing, but helps with pain."

Dream knelt down, as George pulled up the cuffs on his pants showing Dream the wound.

"You better hurry up, the sun's setting." George reminded causing Dream to roll his eyes.

Dream grabbed the leaves gently wrapping them around George's cut. It was fairly deep, but Dream knew it would heal by tomorrow. George held in his winces, but both were being careful, aware of the fact that George was never the best with pain tolerance.

"The sun's setting huh?" Dream repeated with a small chuckle, but his mind still completely

focused on George's leg. "If your leg was any better we could have climbed up that tree and reenacted our minecraft date." He teased.

"You're the one who shot it, idiot." George rebuked, causing Dream to look down, feeling guilty. "It's fine though it doesn't hurt anymore." George lied, hoping it would ease Dream a bit.

"Though you were an enemy." Dream said bluntly, "Though I should've recognized your skin."

"It's okay." George shrugged. "Speaking of skins, I'm a bit surprised Bad spawned as his real-life self though, rather than how he is usually drawn in fanarts." George added, though he hadn't seen Bad's face through his hood, it was a safe assumption he made by looking at his hands.

Dream laughed a bit. "Yeah, most skins are just our actual selves in clothing to represent our skins." Dream explained. "Just imagine how stupid people like Skeppy would look, heck how I would look!"

George laughed a bit, smiling to himself.

"So is under that mask you're actual face, and not just some green blob?" George asked, causing Dream to smirk under his mask.

"I'm not showing you my face idiot." He replied, expecting more resistance from George, but got none.

George leaned his back onto the tree. "Y'know Dream, I missed you." The Brit admitted, as he took in the fresh air, far less dusty than the air back in the cell.

Dream snickered as he finished the leaf wrap. "Aww, I love you too George!" He teased, causing George to roll his eyes.

"You're such a scam," He replied as Dream helped him up, recalling their argument on stream. "I hate you." George replied, though they both could tell he didn't mean it.

"No you don't." Dream said in a laugh, as they both looked ahead of them, the sun set illuminating a plains biome in front them.

He still had so many questions though. About the game, and the players with in it, but George felt it could wait.

After all, he was too busy admiring the sunset with Dream.

George closed his eyes for a bit, finally feeling his worries and fears eased.

How ironic that a part of him felt safer now that he could die at any minute.

How ironic that his panic disappeared the moment he reunited with his friends.

How ironic that George felt the happiest he's felt in weeks, now that he was standing next to Dream.

How ironic.

He masked man chuckled to himself, bringing George back out of his thoughts. Dream dramatically grabbed George's hand bringing it towards him, hiding a mischievous smirk. "Just two men on a date-"

George yanked it out, as Dream laughed at his expression. "What?"

Chapter End Notes

Sorry if you guys expected their meet to be filled with angst lol; I'm saving all the parts that could be called 'angst' I guess for later. Anyways the two f i n a l l y met and I'm really excited to continue writing this. Pls give me feedback on this because idk if it lived up to your guys' expectations.

Pls kudos if you guys enjoyed as it actually sincerely means alot to me, and I can't believe we reached 200 its amazing. Tysm for all the support!! (Also hehe 10000 words yayy)

Also Bad actually went bald wtf-

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George couldn't help but feel a bit guilty as he got on Dream's horse.

When morning hit the next day, George jokingly complained about the pain in his leg, though it had significantly decreased. It was meant to be a joke, but Dream said he wasn't fit to walk regardless.

So it made George slightly guilty, knowing that Dream would have to walk alongside the group in heavy armor in order to be ready for an attack.

But George was only *slightly* guilty.

In fact, the guilt was so minuscule, that George refused to go anywhere if Dream would have to walk.

"Dream, switch with me!" George said, arms crossed. "My leg's fine it was a joke!"

Dream chuckled, as he continued to double check his inventory. "You're gonna scam me and guilt trip me after, not falling for it."

George pouted, causing Bad to laugh. "Knowing this muffin he's going to be the one guilt tripping George." Bad commented, causing Dream to scoff at him.

"Exactly, Dream I refuse to move this horse." George announced dramatically. "You're armor is really heavy, you're just going to keep complaining about it."

Dream rolled his eyes "Fine, then I'll give you my armor instead." Dream argued, opening another menu in his inventory and taking off his armor.

"That's *your* armor, idiot!"

"And it was *your* leg that was shot with an arrow!"

Sapnap and Purpled walked out of the cave they stayed in, both carrying a bunch of cooked food, as they talked.

The two could be heard from within the cave, so they already had a grasp on the argument, and were joking about it, but the pair was now giving each other death stares and physically being there was certainly different.

Dream looked over at his other friend, and though his face wasn't visible, but Sapnap could tell he was pissed. "Sapnap, tell this idiot to just stay on the fucking horse."

"Maybe if you called me Sapnap I'd consider it." He quipped, ignoring Bad's 'Language' and causing Dream to scoff in annoyance again. It was obvious Dream still felt guilty though, even though no one would admit it. Sapnap had to empathize with his friend. "But Dream's right." He added. "We're used to the armor so it'll be fine. Your leg got shot yesterday, you shouldn't walk too much."

George rolled his eyes, not giving a response. He would've jumped off the horse by now, but

because of the difficulty he had getting on the thing due to his injury and height, he opted out of it. He would wait for Dream to agree to switch, before getting off the horse in case he lost and he'd have to get on it again.

And George basically admitted to himself that he knew we was losing the argument.

"I already told you my leg is fine, I can walk." George argued causing Dream to just start leaving.

"We're just gonna go George, and you better use the horse." Sapnap said, as he got on his own.

Still as the group walked George refused to move forward. He just sat there, on the horse, not commanding any movement, pouting to himself like a child.

The group had walked a hundred blocks as Purpled kept taking quick glances behind him. "Guys, I don't think he is following."

"Just wait for it." Dream said, but the confidence was slowly draining out of his voice.

George was stubborn, Dream would call him an idiot for it. He refused to budge, sitting contently on the horse, having not moved an inch.

"George we need to get to the base before night time!" Dream called out, but George didn't mind him, in fact from this far he probably couldn't even hear him.

Dream grunted in annoyance as he began to defeatedly make his way back towards his friend, causing Sapnap to let out a chuckle.

"Can't you two just share the damn horse." He suggested, causing Dream to snicker.

It was a funny idea, but the saddle was too small, and they would really have to squeeze in together to be able to fit.

And it would definitely make George blush too.

But it was also stupid idea, another one of Sapnap's dumb prompts to get another opportunity to tease them.

So it hit them both by surprise when Dream climbed up the horse sitting right behind George, his torso right against George's back.

George blushed at the contact, thankful for the fact that Dream was behind him and couldn't see his blush.

But Dream could easily tell he was flustered when he jumped as Dream wrapped his arms around his friend in order to grab the reins in front of him.

The armor was metal, it was cold and hard against his shirt, but Dream's hands were exposed and gripping the reins to close to George's he could feel the warmth.

Dream's hands were warm.

"You happy now, idiot?" Dream asked, evidently smirking under the mask. If it wasn't for his mask blocking the air coming out, George was certain he'd be able to feel Dream's breath on his neck.

He preferred not to think about that though.

George didn't reply, too distracted by the fact he was being sandwiched in between Dream's arms. Dream controlling the horse with the reins and walking towards the rest of the group.

Sapnap couldn't stop laughing though as he saw them. "Oh my God, George you are so short!"

The group was finally on the road, going at a walking pace.

But Bad was oddly silent as the group made small talk, causing them to look at him with worry.

"Bad, you okay?" Dream asked, leaning forward to get a better look at Bad, and making George blush again at the contact.

Bad seemed shocked at the sudden mention of his name but quickly shrugged it off. "Yeah, I'm fine. It's just I can't stop thinking about that Steve. Do you think he respawn-"

"He's dead." Dream said bluntly recalling what they had told him about the escape. "He won't respawn, Bad."

Bad, put his hands in his pockets as if solemnly paying respects to him. "Oh,"

The atmosphere died down, the group falling into a silence. To the three who were in the cell, seeing the life-less eyes of that man was somehow akin to trauma of some sorts. It was the unforgettable wish of man to 'Free the Game' was what caught George of guard the most though.

Purpled coughed, breaking the mood with the same question on the other two's minds. "Who were they?" He asked. "Those people guarding the cell."

Dream clicked his tongue, as if looking for a way to word it. "It's the people who gave up." He finally answered. "The ones who said beating the game was impossible, and decided to give up on it." His tone was full of malice as he spoke about them.

"So how does that relate to caging and attacking us instead?" George asked, shooting a quick glance at Dream behind him.

"From what we know," Sapnap answered for Dream. "Their goal is kill us, and stop us from beating the game."

They exchanged weird looks as Bad spoke out everyone's thoughts. "Why would those muffins want to stop us though? Shouldn't they leave it up to us to beat the game since they can't?"

"To gain infinite respawns." Dream quickly answered. "Since they don't believe beating the game is possible, they know that if they just stay here, they would die at some point. So those bastards are resorting to killing us instead, that way they live." He explained, and George noticed his grip on the reins tighten and his shoulders harden. "They're just selfish."

The group stayed silent for a bit, processing what Dream had just said.

"So what about the cell, what was that?" Purpled asked.

"They built that whole thing around spawn so anyone who logs in would be put in there. There's more than one cage too, covers the whole spawn area, so I bet some of the name tags you guys saw were other prisoners." Sapnap said. "It's pretty recent though so Dream and I didn't have to deal with that."

"And enderman bait?" George followed.

Dream sighed. "Endermen are smarter here, and they'll target the easiest players each night. So they send out a player, and leave him there without armor for the endermen to target. The armored players kill the enderman and burn the pearls so we can't get them."

"And the players do they-"

"They usually die." Dream finished bluntly, causing George to evidently shiver at the thought.

The dozens of players that were sent in recently were probably still in that cell too, and there was nothing they could do but wait for them to die.

Dream gently and subtly placed his hands over his friend's, but George didn't notice it, his mind panicking at the given information.

Death.

It was so fucking easy to die in this game.

"This is just like a really unfair fifty-thousand player manhunt." George commented causing the group to lightly chuckle, it was an empty laugh though, as they were all still taking in the new information.

"I guess you could put it that way." Dream replied, still laughing bit at George's interpretation.

That's when Sapnap stopped, as he double checked his coordinates menu.

"It's here guys," He said getting off the horse, puzzling the group as they stared at the large mountain with a wide beautiful waterfall flowing into a lake. The lake had a few lily pads, and flowers surrounding it, but though it was certainly a pretty sight it was empty and would have been completely useless to most people.

"Sapnap you're an idiot." George sarcastically commented as he looked around him. "I'm pretty sure colorblindness doesn't mean I can't see any houses."

Sapnap just laughed at him, showing off a proud smirk as he disappeared into the waterfall.

Chapter End Notes

Instead of focusing on exposition I decided to write 800 words about Dream and George fighting about a horse. Lovely. I'll answer the rest of the questions and clarify stuff about the game next chapter lol.

Also if you didn't know this is crossposted on wattpad lol.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George savored his steak, as he took a seat on the hay bales by the farming field. It was a quiet place away from the rest of the crowd of players.

He leaned back resting his head on the tree behind him.

He'd finally made it. He was safe with in a walls of the base. After everything that had happened he was finally with his friends again, relieved he could finally do something about this glitch.

But the more he learned about the world around him, the more out of reach beating the game felt.

There were people out to kill him.

George shuddered at the thought, from the outside world there was almost no way to tell, but once one joined they would be immediately hit with such a reality, and it was frightening to think about the number of players who logged in, only to just die.

And become enderman bait.

"You not going to join everyone?" A familiar voice asked, prompting George to turn around and gave his masked friend a smile. "They're all at the eating hall."

"No, I just figured I'd just meet everyone tomorrow." George replied. "I'm still really tired, and I think my mind needs a break."

Dream chuckled. "Yeah from all the stalking you did of my profile."

George shot up, his glasses falling on his face. "I did not stalk!" He argued over Dream's laughter. "I merely checked and noticed something. Who the hell told you anyways?"

"Bad did." Dream answered, obviously amused by his friend. "You'd have known that if you ate with us, but then again it's not like I can blame you when I'm doing the same thing." He said as he took a seat next to George, pulling out a bowl of mushroom stew.

George smiled, pulling up his shades as the sun's rays hit his eyes. "Why the hell do you guys eat dinner so early?!"

"So we can all get to sleep before night duh." Dream responded. "I mean the base is full of torches, but just in case monsters spawn."

He perked up slightly at the mention of mobs. He hadn't actually encountered one yet, but he wasn't even confident he could beat a simple zombie in his state.

"Interesting." George said, as he took a better look at the base. It was huge, and heavily fortified and well hidden. It must've taken a while to build. "Are like all the players here?" George asked. "You know the ones who aren't trying to kill us."

Dream shook his head. "I mean certainly a lot of them, but no, not all." He said. "There are other bases like this one, led by different people, and we usually team up for the important stuff."

"Interesting." George tilted his head at the new information. "Hmm, who leads this one? Do you, *Commander Dreeeaam*?" George said, joking exaggerating his friend's name causing him to chuckle.

"It's a board of a bunch of really good players." He explained, amused at his friend's antics, or more less happy to just be with him in general. "But yeah, I guess I'm a part of that board."

"Interesting." George repeated. "So how many people are here?"

"I don't know, few thousand." Dream shrugged. "We're one of the bigger bases though."

"Inchrestin-" George repeated again causing Dream to roll his eyes under the mask.

"Enough with the inchresting, you're such an idiot." He said making George lightly giggle.

He moved closer to Dream, his childish laugh's echoing. Dream was about to blush at the sudden proximity before George started yelling straight into his ear.

"Interesting! Interesting! Inchresti-"

Dream pushed away his friend's face with a laugh.

"Shut up."

Dream lifted up his mask ever so slightly as he took a sip from the stew. His mouth was visible, curved into a bright smile from laughing with his best friend, and George just couldn't look away from it.

Dream's smile.

Dream has dimples.

George felt a slight blush form at the sight of it, immediately turning around to look away. Of course Dream had to have dimples.

George giggled to himself, continuing to eat his food. Why should it matter to him that Dream has dimples?

It doesn't.

It doesn't matter to him whatsoever.

"Mmm! Minecraft steak is so good!" George said, half because it was actually really good, and half because he wanted to take his mind off of his friend.

"You're just so used to McDonalds all the time." Dream quipped. "It always tastes the same so you get sick of it after being here so long."

"How long have you been here though?" George asked, Dream looked at him weird assuming he should already know the answer. "Steve said something about time going faster." He explained, Dream's confusion diminishing.

Dream tilted his head at the question, as if counting the time he's been here. "5 months."

George felt a slight pang in his throat as he heard those words. To him it was a few weeks without his best friend, to Dream it was months, but Dream seemed completely fine. And part of him was

upset that his friend didn't seem as affected as he was.

George scoffed to himself at the thought, why should that even matter?

"You okay?" Dream asked, bringing George out of his thoughts again. Damn, he needed to stop zoning out.

"Yeah," George assured, but he could tell Dream was skeptical even through his mask, so he decided to play it off as a joke. "I'm fine, just so horribly depressed that you had to live without me for so long."

"I took it as a blessing," Dream joked back, causing George to roll his eyes. His friend was an idiot. "But it's nice to know you just couldn't live without me!"

"What other shit did Bad tell you?" George asked, playfully frowning. He could see his friend's cocky grin, and though he should've been annoyed at it, he couldn't help but smile back.

Dream laughed, relaxing as he took a sip of his stew. "Nothing else."

They both sat in a comfortable silence as they ate, relishing the extra bit of safety that they felt. But that feeling didn't last long as George remembered those players out to kill them. They weren't NPC's. They were real people who had lost hope on beating the game.

And to result to that, how hard did it have to be?

"Do those people have names?" George asked. "You know the ones who want to kill us, as a group do they have a name?"

"I don't think so." Dream replied. "Like Sapnap just calls them 'those assholes' or something stupid like that."

The Brit laughed again. That was totally something their friend would do. "So the 'assholes' are the ones with the ability to respawn, interesting-"

"I think you misunderstood me." Dream cut off his friend causing him so give Dream a confused look. "They can't all respawn, mostly only the generals can."

George still sat there confused, nodding but obviously not fully understanding what his friend was trying to say. "Wait so how do they get respawns again?"

Dream clicked his tongue, realizing he hadn't explained it very well. "Someone. Someone in their group with the power to switch the gamemodes or rather game difficulty of certain players. Look at our hearts George, we're in hardcore."

George took a look at the bottom of his vision with his hotbar and spotted it. His hearts to represent his health had a slightly different texture, the indistinguishable sign of hardcore minecraft.

He winced at the sight of it. Sure, he definitely should have expected it, but now it just felt a bit more real.

George frowned to himself. If the players they were up against were on easy then they would not only be able to respawn, but they would also take much less damage. "Wait so why don't they just make everyone in their group a easy difficulty then, like wouldn't it be super OP they could just respawn all the time and take crazy risks."

Dream smirked at the question, as if he was expecting it. "The board discussed this a lot already, but we just guessed that changing game difficulty isn't as easy as typing in a command." Dream explained. "So that's kind of their motivation, kill a lot of us, prove they are valuable enough to have respawns granted to them."

George scoffed. "That's sickening."

"Exactly."

"So who is this 'someone' who doesn't want us to beat the game so badly that he'd give out free respawns to kill us?"

Dream stayed silent for a bit, his mood worsening at the thought of it. He thought it was hidden by his mask, but George could notice his fists clenching from the corner of his vision.

"We don't know." He said, almost feeling defeated.

"How? You've been here for what, 5 months?" George asked, hiding his frustration.

Dream just nodded, not bothering to reply. It was evident that it's been eating away at him for a while, and George suddenly felt bad for being frustrated in the first place.

George wanted to stop questioning his friend, ease the tension in the atmosphere and joke around a bit more, but one question kept creeping back into his mind.

"Dream, how did you respawn?"

Dream didn't answer, his expression hidden beneath the mask he pulled back down. He stayed quiet for a bit, as George tried desperately to search his friend. He couldn't tell what he was thinking, nor could he even get a grasp of his expression, but he could sense a strange feeling he bottled up at the mention of those words.

A strange sense of guilt.

"I... I don't know." He finally answered, avoiding eye-contact with his friend. Eye contact that was impossible to begin with due to the mask.

George just wanted to rip the stupid thing off.

He sighed deciding to change the mood.

"Alright where's our progress?" George asked, changing the topic slightly. "Let's beat this game already come on!" He joked, exaggerating a playful sense of enthusiasm.

Dream looked back at his friend with a smile. "We've got about 150 pearls in this base, but in the others' I'd say we have about 800 in total including ours."

George nodded before processing what his friend had just said. He shot his Dream a pure and utter look of confusion, causing Dream to laugh.

"What do you mean 800!?"

"Oh, did I forget to mention, instead of 12 eyes, we need 1200."

Ahh yes, the info dump chapter. Hopefully a lot of stuff has been clarified and answered. If you guys still have questions, feel free to ask and I'll just let ya'll know if its a spoiler.

Also school has been giving so much homework it's killing me, like it's way more than I thought it would be. I also have to prep for a math competition (yes it's as depressing as it sounds) so would you guys mind if I changed the update schedule to twice a week? How does every Monday and Friday sound?

^^^

Btw this won't be in effect yet, I'll just let you all know once I need extra time and if ever it will likely only be like this for a couple weeks.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George tightened his grip on the stone sword, swinging it harder at the large oak tree in front of him.

It had been four days since he had arrived in the base, and combat training was his first priority.

Dream was seated under the same tree, away from the trunk George was hitting, observing his friend's strikes and movement.

The pair was training in the middle of an open plain within the base, devoid of any people. They had a training hall with some built in dummies, and practice materials for sword fighting, but Dream insisted there was too many people and too much noise there.

So George's first target ended up being a tree. A very hard tree.

"George, that's barely enough to deal damage to a chicken." Dream ridiculed, causing his friend to just roll his eyes at him.

"I bet you were hardly any better your first time." George retorted, causing Dream to just scoff at his friend.

That was indeed true, Dream wasn't any better his first time, but he just ignored him, refusing to admit it.

George took another deep breath before hitting the tree again, this time stronger and enough to at least make some sort of noise.

He needed to get good with this sword.

They needed to beat this game

His life depended on it.

His friends' lives depended on it.

Dream's life depended on it.

George could remember all those times wherein he used wonder what made beating the game so hard. With 50,000 thousand players beating the Enderdragon should have been easy and simple, right?

Wrong.

The game was scaled like crazy making drops insanely rare.

Players were in hardcore minecraft, meaning not only did they die when killed, but they also took more damage.

The end portal needed 1200 eyes to fill.

And there were people, some with the ability to infinitely respawn, out to kill them.

What kind of mess did George get himself into?

"You two practicing?" Sapnap asked as he walked towards them causing the pair to look at him.

"Not the two of us, just this idiot, I'm trying to teach him how to use a sword." Dream answered gesturing for Sapnap to sit next to him.

Sapnap faked a face of disgust. "The hell, don't use a sword. Axes are better, way more powerful!"

"They're too fucking heavy." George complained, taking a break from swinging his weapon and leaning against the tree he was previously hitting. He had already tried using an axe but dropped the idea the moment he tried picking it up. "I can barely even lift them."

"I'm just stronger than you George." Sapnap grinned.

"No, you're just slower. You use an axe because you're so reliant on a shield, which slows you down to the point you can't get two consecutive hits with a sword." Dream smugly responded.

A proud smirk appeared on George's face as he eyed his friend. "Is that true, oh Sappitus Nappitus?"

"I bet I could beat you in a fight." He answered causing George to just shut up and continue hacking at the tree.

Fighting in this game was much harder than George would've liked it to be though. While many aspects of this world remained true to minecraft, combat was changed entirely, now requiring much more skill and precision.

It was completely different, and not exactly in a good way.

He didn't know how actual fighting was supposed to be, what it was meant to look like and which moves were actually viable. He had no idea as to what he was actually supposed to do, and how to do damage to the enemy other than by blindly swinging his sword at them. And he had no experience, never having felt the true momentum and adrenaline of battle.

But there was someone who did, and he was seated right next to him, studying him.

"Dream, fight me." George suddenly said. It wasn't a question, it came off like command of some sorts.

But George immediately regretted saying it, shrinking backwards, as Dream tilted his head slightly. Dream was probably thinking about how stupid that was, but George couldn't tell because he couldn't even see his friend's expression.

Fuck that stupid mask.

"The hell? You'll fight Dream but not me?!" Sapnap playfully complained, arms crossed. George looked away, not knowing how to respond before his friend stepped in.

"It's cause you use an axe, idiot." Dream replied. "George, just wants to use this as practice, and obviously since he's using a sword, he'll need to fight me instead, right?" He said, asking George the last part in which he just quickly nodded in response.

His friend then grabbed a stone sword from his inventory, and walked up to George. They stood

across each other on the plains, under the tree. Dream lifted up his mask so that his mouth was exposed but still covering his eyes, presumably to help with heavy breathing or panting.

But George felt the need to curse under his breath as he watched his friend cockily smirk at him.

Fuck those stupid dimples.

Sapnap clapped his hands as the two of them readied, holding their swords. "Okay fine then, first one to get one hit on the other person wins." He announced.

It made sense that they would rather not injure the other person, as regeneration would have been a hassle. So one hit would have to win the fight. "Of course we both know it'll be Dream, but I guess that's not the point of this fight anyways." He inserted, causing George to roll his eyes and Dream to lightly chuckle.

George smiled to himself as he listened to it. His friend's laugh was one of the dumbest things in existence and yet it somehow never failed to shove that fuzzy feeling back into his chest.

Fuck that stupid laugh.

Fuck that fuzzy feeling.

Fuck all of that, because George just couldn't stop thinking about it.

Dream's stance was careless and confident, as he took the first move against George. He ran forward, jumping. Both hands were on his sword, holding it above his head, when he pushed it down.

George stood still as he watched him, closing his eyes as if waiting for the impact, but he stopped the movement right before hitting George.

"That's how you get a crit on the opponent." Dream explained stepping back, "Aim for the head from above them and it does extra damage."

George just nodded at the new found information. It was barely noticeable, but his hands were shaking. If Dream was aiming to kill, such a precise thrust would have certainly been the death of him.

And that scared him.

"George you have to actually try dodging my attacks you know that right?" Dream asked, earning another half-nod from George.

He noticed his friend's expression and laughed. "You're short George, you'll need to get a good jump to be able to execute it." He said, causing George to just roll his eyes. "But if you want to counter that, you'll have to either shield or dodge."

And while George was absorbing the new information, Dream slashed his weapon towards the side of George's torso.

This time, George stepped back, narrowly avoiding Dream's sword and deciding to try hit back with his own, the hit was weak, but effective enough to make Dream need to take a step back an distance himself.

"Dream what the hell, you distracted me!" George complained, trying to act upset, but the smile on

his face was defying him.

"You're not supposed get distracted idiot." Dream rebuked, running towards George with a sword in hand.

Knowing he couldn't block the force of his friend's attack, George instead dodged again, before trying to get a quick hit on Dream.

He just needed one hit. One hit Dream was making impossible to get.

He tried to strike Dream's arm but he quickly countered it with his own, causing George to run back and make distance with him.

Both wanted to win. Both wanted to have the bragging right of victory, yet somehow the fight just kept stretching on.

Dream would try hitting George and he would dodge, but would be unable to hit back with Dream easily countering him, over and over again.

Yet neither of them were able to contain the grins that somehow found their way to their faces.

It was weird, to be practicing something so deadly and important, but find so much enjoyment out of it, and George was losing too, pretty horrifically.

He noted all the times Dream nearly hit him and almost ended the fight, but didn't, instead missing his strikes.

On purpose, obviously.

George could tell Dream had tried to be sneaky about it, but he wasn't that stupid, and it was easily noticeable after George had dodged so many. Dream could blame it his height all he wanted, but George knew he wasn't that lucky.

Dream was skilled, he'd been in this game for months and George knew that the fight was only meant for training. Yet he still jumped in happiness each time he dodged one Dream's half-hearted attacks and laughed to himself whenever Dream complained about him being impossible to hit, but then dropped him a small combat tip.

It was dumb to be celebrating something like that, but he kept doing so anyways, relishing the feeling of listening to the laughter that came after.

Dream's laughter which George just couldn't get out of his head.

Deciding to try going on the offensive for once, George ran forward, leaning swiftly to the side in order to try gain a hit.

One hit, it didn't matter where or how hard.

He baited Dream towards him, pretending to go for his arm to which his friend prepared to block. In a swift movement he bent down, reaching out to hit his friend's leg.

He laughed to himself. Dream wasn't trying, he wasn't trying whatsoever. But even a simple win like this would give him bragging rights for days.

His sword was inches away from Dream's leg when he swiftly dodged the attack.

Surprised, George almost fell over, but was caught by Dream who was suddenly behind him holding onto his hand and stopping him from hitting the grass.

George smiled to himself. "Tha-" He muttered out before realizing Dream was gripping onto his dominant hand wielding the sword. In one quick motion he twisted it, causing George to lose his grip and drop the sword leaving him unarmed as he faced Dream.

With a cocky smirk on his face, Dream pushed George's back onto the tree, cornering him, and brought the sword to his neck.

The motion was so quick and precise that George was barely able to comprehend it as he leaned further into the trunk, away from the blade.

He wanted to laugh to himself at his previous thought of possibly winning the fight, as he had forgotten one key feature about his friend.

He had pride.

And he wasn't about to let it go just like that.

George's heart raced as Dream playfully moved in closer bringing the sword barely an inch away from his throat.

And yet somehow in a situation like this George was still zoning out at the sight of his friend's smirk.

Fucking dimples.

Dream laughed to himself in victory, leaning closer as he whispered into his friend's ear. "Nice try Georgie."

George shot up into a blush as he playfully pushed his friend away, pretending to pout, as his friend gently pressed the back-end of his sword on George's arm, claiming the victory.

"Don't call me that, idiot." He replied, moving his shades over his eyes in attempt to hide the blush forming.

Dream just burst into laughter dropping his sword on the ground.

"Told ya Dream would win." Sappnap said, a little too smugly considering he wasn't even part of the fight.

"Why were you just so quiet the whole time?" Dream asked through the laughter. "I almost forgot you were even here."

Sappnap smirked to himself. "I have my reasons." He replied, and before the two could question him about it, hundreds of players began running past them.

People were getting up from their tasks, and hurrying towards the large eating hall.

The group watched the commotion, exchanging confused looks until Sappnap approached one of the younger children.

"What's going on, where's everyone going?" He asked.

She looked at the trio with a wide smile on her face. "Didn't you hear?"

"They found the fortress."

Chapter End Notes

So Skeppy and Wilbur's Hogwarts house?

Also I'll be doing Mondays and Fridays because homework :))), so Thanks for the support on that!

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

To most people, after finding the fortress, they'd expect a celebration of joy, but there was none here.

Only the silent fear looming over them.

They had been searching for months, and they never really expected to find it anymore. But when they did the trauma of the first fortress began transforming back into reality.

The first fortress.

Dream wasn't part of that fight, but he was certain he would've died if he had been. It was where 5000 players were killed, all in a day.

It was where Technoblade had died.

And though they all knew it was coming, the reality of finding another one was nothing short of terrifying.

The last time they found a fortress, thousands died.

So how were they so sure it wouldn't happen again?

They weren't.

The trio waited in the hall for the announcement. The players were all gathered there, whispers filling the room.

The atmosphere was tense and crowded, and by instinct Dream found himself gripping George's hand. He didn't notice though, feeling overwhelmed by the situation surrounding him.

Dream watched as a young boy entered the stage, his blonde hair now in a mess, as his scouting group followed him, their clothes tattered and armor deteriorating.

Of course it had to be Tubbo and TommyInnit to find it.

But as Tommy stepped on the stage to make the announcement Dream noticed the bags he had under his eyes and how his legs were shivering.

He was a victim, shoved into the game by force. Like Sapnap, he'd seen it all, and watched the deaths first hand. But he looked fine. At first glance he seemed just like a slightly more serious version of who everyone knew as TommyInnit.

But Dream could see through the facade.

The brave face he put on was a cover up from the trauma he'd seen. He was too young for this, but he was skilled, meaning he was shoved onto the front lines, and he pretended it was completely fine. He pretended he was okay with this world.

And in a way they all did too.

And when he spoke, everyone's greatest wishes and worst fears came true. "Everyone, we found the fortress!"

The announcement went over the location of the fortress and how they managed to find it.

Dream spoke too in that meeting, going over the plan he and many others has worked on to perfection.

And when it was over, the players flooded out rushing to make their preparations.

Dream knew those two would never let him live it down that they had found the fortress before him, and yet that wasn't even the first thing on his mind.

For it was George.

It was always George.

He sighed. It was already the next day and he was making his way back towards the blacksmiths. The usually quiet store was filled to brim with players, many of them requesting new armor and weapons for the journey, but there really was no rush.

They had time.

When Tommy's scout team had found the fortress, they didn't enter it. Only noting down the coordinates and rushing back. They couldn't risk having the achievement displayed in chat for everyone to see, so as far as Dream was concerned, they didn't know.

For now their enemy was the fortress, not them.

He squeezed through the players, making out his friends in the crowd. George was sitting on one of the nearby chairs, his legs dangling just above the ground.

God, he was short.

And he seemed giddy too, like a child happily examining a toy. If you could call a newly made diamond sword a toy.

"So how's the sword, Georgie?" Dream asked, causing his friend to jump slightly.

"The hell don't call me that!" He rebuked as Dream took a seat next to his friend. "Besides its super light, I thought it'd at least be heavier than the stone one."

Dream laughed. "Yeah, cause I told Callahan to make it that way."

George tilted his head as he looked at his friend. "Why?"

"Cause you're so short you wouldn't be able to hold it." Dream teased, causing his friend to playfully punch him in the shoulder.

It was obviously a joke, the real reason being what he'd been able to gather about George's fighting style the day before.

From what Dream knew, George was fast, he could easily dodge attacks and switch directions, his height being helpful in that scenario. His hits weren't particularly strong, but if he could find a way

to strike the enemies' weak spot that wouldn't be a problem.

So the sword he had made ended up being thinner and lighter, that way it wouldn't slow him down.

"And it was cheaper too."

George rolled his eyes as he admired the sword. "I didn't even know you could make stuff outside of crafting recipes."

"It's not really a different recipe," Dream replied. "I guess it's just a modified version of a normal sword, do you like it?"

"It's diamond, duh I like it." He said, not really answering Dream's question. It didn't matter though, the grin on his face answered it for him. "But why do we need so many people for the fortress?" George asked, watching all the players running back and forth.

"Remember this version of minecraft is different, and the fortress is fucking huge." Dream explained. He was about to continue but was interrupted by George's giggles.

And he had to admit it was a little cute.

"What?" Dream said, obviously trying not to laugh.

George didn't stop though, grinning to himself. "Is it the biggest thing you've ever seen?"

"You're such an idiot."

Dream sorted through his chest, double checking his armor's enchantments. He could barely concentrate though, his mind instead wandering back to his friend.

"Where's George?" A voice suddenly asked, causing Dream to turn back in shock, only to see Sapnap leaning onto the wall by the door.

"Ever heard of knocking?" He replied, causing his friend to roll his eyes. "And George is enchanting."

"The hell, you gave him your lapis for that didn't you?" Sapnap teased, a wide smirk on his face.

Dream just laughed at his friend's antics. "As if. I didn't need to, we have so much extra."

His friend hollowly laughed as he approached Dream, his footsteps seemingly getting heavier as he approached him. Dream didn't mind him, continuing to distract himself from his numerous thoughts by searching through his chest.

"I know you're worried about him, Dream."

Dream jumped at the mention of it, immediately looking back at his friend. After seeing his expression, he let out a defeated sigh, and a slight chuckle to cover up his nervousness. "Was I that obvious?"

"I saw you taking glances at his reactions to just about everything you said earlier." Sapnap laughed. "You were hoping he'd just back out of it."

Dream chuckled. His friend could read him like a book, and though it frustrated him, he couldn't

help but smile at it. "Do you think he knows?"

"Nah, he's a dense dumbass." Sapnap joked. "I'm just surprised you haven't told him to just stay here though."

"I know he'd just go anyways." Dream admitted. "George's too stubborn for that, it'd be pointless and he'd just get upset."

Sapnap nodded in agreement. Dream knew George better than anyone, and he was right. George wasn't the type to just sit there without doing anything, and though Dream would normally admire that part of him, in this situation it was anything but desirable.

"And also, we're short on players willing to fight." Dream sighed. "The board would grill me to death if I told them I wanted to leave someone like that. And everyone else will just hate me even more."

Sapnap shrugged, as he eyed his friend carefully. "Well, I just came here to say you really don't have to worry anymore. George wasn't half bad from your fight yesterday and he'll be fine after a bit of practice."

"I went easy on him." Dream argued causing his friend to laugh.

"Duh, it was pretty obvious." Sapnap laughed. "But don't tell him I said this twice, he wasn't that horrible. And I'm being serious here, why are you so worried about him?"

"It's the nether fortress, of course I would be."

"But its specifically George?" Sapnap teased, raising an eyebrow. "You need to stop being so protective of him."

Dream's face went pink at his friend's words, and suddenly he was extra thankful his skin came with a mask. "I'm not being protective! You say that like we're a couple."

"I thought you were."

"You suck Snapmap."

The two stayed quiet, Dream thinking about what his friend had just said.

And as much as Dream hated to admit it, Sapnap was right. Worrying about George was pointless when there were so many other players with worse innate skill and knowledge, and yet he couldn't help it.

"Listen I know you were against George logging in in the first place." Sapnap said, making his way out. "But you need to learn to put more trust in him, for both of your sakes."

Trust.

Why was that so hard for him?

Maybe it's just that it got more difficult to give the more he didn't want to loose someone, the more someone mattered to him.

Maybe it was because giving trust just made the losses harder.

Or maybe it was because George's life was more important to him than anything else.

For reasons he'd rather not admit to anyone, or rather, himself.

Chapter End Notes

Writing Dreams third person POV is hard because I keep wanting to just go back to George's smh. Btw lot more people will be making cameo's but they won't really be playing major roles.

I didn't see anyone mention this, but at the start when Dream was rapidly gaining achievements it was because of the game's time running faster than the real world.

And SAD-ist's animatic-

Also anyone know any mcyts who could be in Slytherin and Ravenclaw? I kinda need this for their dorm mates.

Last thing, thx to ikanax0 for helping me characterize Tommy. She's cool so check her out on ig.

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

400 Kudos wtf thank you!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It was dawn and over a thousand players were gathered towards the entrance of the base, all geared up in armor and equipped with their weapons.

It was a tense atmosphere, many players saying goodbye to their players and friends like it would be their last time seeing each other.

And George would've been lying if he said he wasn't at least a bit scared.

It was an atmosphere wherein it almost felt like everyone was expecting to die, like they were ready to die. But despite that no one was trying to stall their visit to the fortress.

Because despite all the fear surrounding it, it was the only way to beat the game. And it was the only way to be freed. It was an unavoidable obstacle everyone had been anticipating for months.

So it confused George as to why Dream seemed so worried too. Despite his confident appearance, George noticed his hands shake and the way he avoided talking about it. George thought Dream should've been ready for it by now, after all he had been preparing all this time.

But what he didn't know, was that Dream wasn't exactly worried for himself, but rather for George.

It had been a week since the announcement of the find, and George had spent the days preparing and learning how to fight.

He had gotten better with his sword after having practice fights with Purpled and Bad daily, learning the weak points of each mob and how to counter them, yet he was no where near the level of what Dream wished he was.

But George was firm on coming, and it was obvious nothing was changing that.

George caught Dream speaking to a few players, presumably giving them orders. He walked towards them hoping to be able to talk to his friend before they left. He looked over towards the people Dream was talking to as they handed him some food, and he couldn't shake off the feeling that they were all looking at Dream strangely.

But they weren't the only ones, as George caught many players staring him down as he walked past them. And although Dream pretended not to notice, it almost seemed like he was just used to it.

Used to his supposed allies scornfully looking at him, like they were jealous, or maybe wishing him worse.

Like wishing his death.

George's fists clenched as he listened into the conversation, waiting for it to be over so he could

grab his friend, but it seemed that it wasn't ending. With a playful pout on his face George instinctively grabbed onto his friend's hand pulling on his sleeve.

Dream quickly turned around, noticing George waiting for him, and gave him a smile as the people left.

"What was that about?" George asked, failing to notice how he unconsciously tightened the grip on his friend's hand.

Dream just tilted his head as if it was completely normal. "They just gave me some food, why?"

"I don't know, I felt like they looked at you weird."

Dream shrugged. "They did?"

"Yeah, like they didn't like you or something?" George replied. "Did you do anything to them?"

His friend's eyes lit under his mask realizing what he meant, but suppressed his urge to show any signs of anger and shrugged it off once again. "It's nothing."

George sighed, rolling his eyes, but before he could pester him about it he heard footsteps as the players around him began running out of the base.

They were already leaving.

"Never mind it, let's go George." Dream said, squeezing George's hand to which he only blushed.

They followed the crowd, running out of the waterfall as the sun began to rise. The plan was to travel in the overworld, as the nether was too dangerous for so many people to go through. It was to avoid the deaths that would inevitably come in a pit of lava.

Still, that came with its risks. For one, travelling in the overworld meant it could take as long as weeks to reach their destination, due to the fact that a block in the nether meant 8 in the overworld. Another was that if they were caught at the start, the enemy might get a general grasp of where their base was.

They weren't willing to risk lives for that convenience though.

To combat the second issue, everyone was to leave the base as early in the morning as possible and keep running in order to cover enough distance.

Leading the group was Tommy, as he knew the coordinates of the fortress better than everyone else. The thousand players all followed, running as fast as possible through the plains.

"Dream why the fuck is this armor so heavy!" George complained causing his friend to laugh at him.

"Do I have to make your armor lighter too?" He teased. "You can take it off for now and put it back on later."

George let out an annoyed groan, as he feigned a pout.

They ran through the different biomes, no one stopping to eat or rest.

Time seemed to speed up as they ran into the desert, and before he knew it, George could see the sun rise and set into the ground below.

And everyone stopped, as they began bringing out their weapons and filling up their hunger.

Night was coming.

And that's when the reality hit George like a bullet, as he brought out his sword.

He'd never even seen a mob before.

All his fighting was against his friends, fellow players whom he could laugh with and joke with as he trained.

But now he was going against real enemies, pieces of code with the sole purpose of killing him.

Dream gripped his sword as he cursed under his breath. "Fucking desert, they're gonna spawn like hell." He said, backing up towards George. "Stay with me."

George nodded, as mobs began appearing around him. Seemingly out of no where as he watched zombies and skeletons spawning as they ran towards players.

His eyes were focused as watched the battle unfold around him. Creepers exploding left and right, and spiders jumping up onto players as they blocked.

He swallowed the air behind his throat, trying to maintain his ground to attack one of the monsters in front of him.

But instead he stood still, fear illuminating his face, as players began retreating, eating their food as they had lost health, and screaming.

Because this was a game of death, and there was no coming back.

He turned around at the sound of a hiss, but could only watch as a creeper ran up towards an unsuspecting player, hissing before exploding and killing her.

George covered his mouth to avoid himself from screaming, as her items scattered onto the floor.

He had just witnessed someone die in front of him. Someone who probably had a family to go home to. A real person, who was never coming back.

And he couldn't do anything to stop it.

That was a life that had just been just taken, and suddenly George felt completely powerless.

Tears began falling from his eyes, as his grip on his sword began fumbling. He wanted to move, he wanted to run, but his legs wouldn't let him, as his confidence drained from his body.

George was scared. He had willingly put himself in this situation.

He had willingly jumped in, supposedly to be one of those people to help beat the game. But instead, he had just watched someone die.

So it was his fault.

But before another batch of tears could fall, Dream pushed him to the side away from the shot of a skeleton.

George's breathing quickened, as he watched the arrow fly past him.

It would have hit him on the neck.

It would have nearly killed him.

"George, get your shit together!" He yelled straight at him, before noticing his friend's expression. One of pure and utter fear.

He pushed George's glasses over his face to cover the tears he knew his friend didn't want him to see. "I can't have you dying on me!" He said, almost as if it was a pleading request.

George didn't respond, his heart racing and body shaking as he processed the situation, only watching as his friend grabbed onto both of his shoulders. Dream's features then softened as he comforted his friend.

"Take a deep breath with me okay?"

And he did, a smile finding its way to his face as he scanned his friend's expression which was so full of worry for him.

That's right.

George couldn't die yet.

He needed to stay alive, so he could hear his friend's laugh again.

He had to live, so that maybe one day he could see behind that stupid mask.

He couldn't die, because this idiot just wouldn't let him.

George sighed, as he wiped off his tears and tightened his grip on his sword. "Thanks Dream." He mumbled briefly, earning him a smile from his friend.

The noticed the same skeleton shooting again, and this time dodged the arrow, taking a deep breath. Soon after he ran past his friend and raised his sword.

His grip was fumbling but he managed to hold onto his weapon and before it could shoot again, George quickly hit its arm, ruining its aim. He then ran around it, jumping upwards to slash straight through it's spine.

It was only a piece of code.

He could kill it.

He took a deep breath as he dealt the final strike. The monster disappeared into thin air, similar to how it would in a regular game and dropped a few arrows and bones.

George felt a wave of relief hit as he killed it, picking up its loot and turning around to give Dream a wide smile.

A smile that was returned with one of his own as he slowly clapped.

"Congrats, you killed one single skeleton!" He teased, and although his words were laced with sarcasm, George could tell he was genuinely proud of him.

George's fear subsided, as he normalized his breathing again, before letting out a chilling scream from a zombie that spawned right next time him.

"AHH WHAT THE FUCK?!" He yelled as he stabbed his sword into the monster. The hit barely did any damage but pushed it back enough for George to get some breathing room. "That thing just appeared out of no where!"

Dream let out a wheeze from his reaction. "How are you always getting distracted?" He laughed, casually slicing the zombie and killing it.

"I just didn't see it!" George argued. "You should've warned me."

Dream continued to hold in a laugh as they fought the mobs together.

And George couldn't help but feel mesmerized at his friend's movements, as he killed the mobs around him. It was the first time George had gotten the chance to watch Dream fight properly, and he was absolutely incredible.

And a part of him felt so much safer around him, with just Dream's mere presence calming him.

But there was no way in hell George was ever admitting that.

"You're losing Georgie!" Dream laughed as he killed a spider, counting his kills.

"What, since when was this a competition!?" He shot back, narrowly dodging a creeper explosion.

"Now, I guess." Dream managed to reply through the wheezes.

And although George rolled his eyes at his friend's stupidity, he wouldn't have even minded participating. Because despite the fact that he could die at anytime, he found himself smiling ear to ear as he fought alongside his friend.

He laughed to himself at the irony of the situation.

Just earlier he has having a panic attack, fearful of the chance of death. He was scared to the point he was unable to move, almost taking an arrow to the neck.

And now he was laughing alongside his friend, participating in a stupid contest he knew he would lose.

So why was it always like that?

Why did Dream make him so happy?

"Fine then, bring it on."

Their contest stretched throughout the whole night, the pair exchanging laughs and insults as they killed the mobs.

And as they fought, the night passed. Players started gathering together, and putting away their weapons as the sun began to rise.

The mobs around them started to burn, and George finally relaxed as looked behind him, admiring the view and smiling to himself.

It was over.

He had survived the night.

"Hey, its the sunrise this time." Dream laughed, causing George to once again roll his eyes.

They were just in a near-death situation and that was Dream's reaction. He chuckled to himself at the stupidity. "So what, is this a 'date' again?" George joked, admiring his friend's grin.

Dream started laughing, as he leaned towards his friend. "Do you want it to be?" He smirked, holding in a laugh as George pushed him away.

He didn't respond, letting out a sigh as he ate a piece of steak to regenerate his health, relishing the peace, he and all the players around him finally felt.

He looked through the crowd of players, trying to make out the rest of his friends to see how they were doing when Dream leaned in closer.

"So do you?" Dream repeated, and when George turned to try and read his face he found that his mask was pulled so he could no longer see his expression.

George did the same, pulling his glasses over his face to hide the now forming blush as he thought of his answer, chuckling to himself.

'The stupid thing is, maybe I do.'

But there was no way he was saying that out loud.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was long and hard to write, hope the pacing wasn't too off :///

Btw a lot of people will be making cameos, but just know they probably won't be too relevant in the story. I'll mainly focus on the duo because if I didn't this would just get long and draggier than it already is, so sorry about that.

Also MCC was amazing, but a compilation thumbnail spoiled it for me and I was pissed as fuck. Congrats though to the winners they did amazing.

Last thing can I have constructive criticism on like my writing style, since I'm approaching the parts that are going to be hard to write, and I want to know how I can fix some stuff tysm.

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George hated that his eyes were on Dream.

His friend was busy talking to the other lead players as they continued to walk, presumably something regarding the fortress and their journey there, but George couldn't help but notice the stares he continuously got from the players.

He could see from the corner of his eye, people whispering as they pointed at him, with scowls plastered on their faces.

And for some reason George was absolutely appalled by it.

"George, you seem to be looking at Dream a lot lately." Sapnap teased.

And George stumbled back, hiding his blush as Bad and Sapnap laughed at him. "I'm not looking at *him*." He argued. "I'm looking at the *people* looking at him."

Sapnap raised an eyebrow, clearly doubting him. "Of course you are."

The Brit rolled his eyes, feigning a dramatic pout.

"To be fair, I do see a bunch of weird muffins staring at Dream weirdly." Bad added, catching George's attention.

So he wasn't just hallucinating.

"Yeah I did too, I asked him about it, but he said it was nothing."

Bad frowned, looking at Sapnap. "Do you know why?" He asked.

For a second it looked like he wasn't going to respond, and like he was going to shrug them off just like Dream did before George spoke.

"What exactly did Dream do?"

But he regretted the question immediately as Sapnap clenched his fists looking away from them.

When he faced George again it was with a forced smile, one so filled with anger it was almost impossible not to see through.

"That's the thing." He said, his voice laced with irritation. "Absolutely nothing."

George's eyes lit up in confusion, nearly stopping in his tracks.

"Wait, if its nothing then what's why is everyone looking at him like that?" Bad asked for him, saying what George had just thought.

Sapnap let out a sigh, kicking the grass below him. "You guys already know that Dream respawned right?" George nodded. "Well, people hate him for it."

"What why? He doesn't have any control over that."

"Exactly." Sapnap responded, placing his hands in his pockets. "But a lot of people here had friends who died. Those people aren't coming back, but Dream did."

George's eyes lit up in realization.

Dream didn't do anything.

"If he wasn't so good at the game, I'm sure people would have targeted him by now. They think its unfair he lived, so they hate him for it." Sapnap explained, as he looked at George. "They blame him for being alive, and its fucking disgusting."

"Language!"

George suddenly felt pity for his friend, glancing at him once again.

Knowing him, he'd blame himself too.

Maybe not out loud. To the public, he'd obviously defend himself, after all he did nothing wrong. But the whispers would slowly get to him, and George knew it. In fact, he could tell that they already did.

"It looks like Dream's a criminal right?" Sapnap added, trying to lighten up the mood with a half-joke. "Everyone looks at him like he committed a felony."

"Dream's not a fucking criminal."

"And we know that George." Sapnap sighed. "Everyone does, and yet they continue to hate him. Most of us labeled respawning as a dirty trick only 'they' can do. When we think of it, the first thing that comes to mind is them."

George gritted his teeth in anger tensing up as they walked.

Hating someone for living is a shitty excuse for jealousy.

George recalled the night before, remembering the girl who was exploded by a creeper. She didn't respawn. She died that night, and she probably would've hated Dream too.

George glanced again at his friend, his eyes filled with sadness and anger for him as he turned around and looked at him, displaying his iconic smiley mask.

The mask he probably used to hide it all.

"What pissed you off?" He laughed as he walked towards them, presumably done with his discussion.

Sapnap lightly hit both George and Bad on the shoulder, as if telling them not to say anything. "Nothing, what about you?"

Dream chuckled as he recalled the conversation. "Wilbur sent something out to everyone in chat. It was a code and they asked me to decipher it."

George heard about them using the chat before. It broadcasted the messages to everyone on the map though, so they usually communicated in puzzles.

"What'd it say?"

Dream smiled, relaxing his shoulders. "That we're not alone, and everyone's coming too."

The journey to the fortress was long and treacherous.

Nights weren't as hard as George had thought they would be. For the most part the entire group would dig into a cave and sleep there, but on the occasional time they had to stay up to fight mobs George didn't have as much difficulty as he thought he would.

He supposed it was just him getting used to the mechanics and feel of the game, as objectively the nights should've been easy compared to what was ahead of them.

But although it was tiring, George found some aspects of it fun, like when he forced to squeeze into a boat with Dream or that time Bad's hoodie almost got pulled off.

He had gotten a lot of practice within that time and before he knew it almost two weeks had past.

And they were almost there.

And George just began dreading the fortress more and more, hiding away the fear the managed to creep its way into his mind.

Getting burned seemed like a painful experience, and he definitely would've liked to avoid it.

Getting withered seemed dreadful, and he didn't know how it would even feel like.

And getting killed was something he didn't even want to think about.

George sighed as he put those thoughts away, listening as their group chatted to one another like they normally would, taking about the potential strategies and plays they could do within the fortress.

In and out of the nether as fast as possible. That was the plan.

But all of a sudden they came to a stop, the crowd of people squishing together as people tried pushing past one another to move forward.

George went on his toes trying to look past him, but found himself just frowning at his height.

"I can't see anything, what's going on?" He asked, but his voice was muffled by the whispers and chatters of the players around them.

Sapnap tried pushing past the players but failed. "I can't see either, Dream what is it?"

But he didn't respond, telling them to see for themselves, as the crowd slowly spaced away from one another, quickly rushing to explore the location.

It was a spruce village, burnt down to the ground, the only things left being the cobblestone bases of the house and the well.

George stood there in shock at the sight. There was nothing left there, almost seeming like a barren waste land.

But when Dream looked at it, he almost seemed mournful, as if was a sight he'd already seen many times, but one he would never accept.

"Quick! Set up shelter!" George heard someone yell, and all of a sudden players were quickly building makeshift bases, using the cobblestone bases to speed up the process.

George looked up at the sky noting that it was afternoon. A little earlier than when they normally would, but from the state everyone was in, it didn't seem like they would have been able to continue walking regardless.

George glanced at his friend, who had taken a seat on one of the burnt down houses.

And though his expression was covered by a mask George could feel the strange sense of sorrow and fear radiating from here as he processed the situation.

He was about to ask about it when Sapnap came walking up to them.

"The villagers here are different George." He butted in, reading his thoughts. "They aren't like the idiots they are in actual minecraft."

"What do you mean?" He asked.

Sapnap furrowed his eyebrows, finding a way to describe it before being interrupted by Dream. "They're like AI's." He explained, keeping his head down as if he was paying respects. "They talk and act a lot like real people. Have you seen the farmers back at the base?" He asked, and George nodded in response. "Well some of them villagers. Here they are essentially just players who can't even fight back."

His eyes lit up in horror as he looked around once more, this time seeing the disaster in a whole new light.

These villagers could think, smile and laugh just like them. They were lives too, wrapped up in this mess.

Meaning this was a mass murder.

"When the hunters find a village the burn it down so we can't get any pearls from them." Sapnap added. "They kill all them, and they can't switch professions here too, so its as long as the clergy are dead."

So they were calling them the hunters now.

And clergy apparently.

But neither of them pointed it out, too busy making out their situation.

"That's the thing." Dream said, as he stood up. "That means they found this village already."

Sapnap shot him a weird look tilting his head. "Yeah we know that, and?"

"We didn't think they were this far out." Dream cursed under his breath as he reorganized his thoughts. "We assumed it'd just be us against the nether, but the fortress should only be some thousand blocks away from here."

George shot up in realization, as the thoughts flooded through his mind.

The fortress just got a thousand times more dangerous.

Because they weren't just fighting the game.

"The hunters, they're right on our tail."

Chapter End Notes

To all the people asking where Purpled is he's been hanging out with Tubbo and Tommy.

Also sorry if this chapter was a bit short, but next chapter is like 3k words soo... yay??

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

They arrived at the said coordinates the next day.

The dark oak forest, filled to the brim with people, training with their swords and chatting to one another about the plan.

The players there seemed so relaxed, relishing in the little time they had left together before the big fight, yet still taking their time to organize their items as they waited for the other players.

People all from different bases, most of which George had never seen before besides the famous names he knew from the real world.

Their group looked over them from a hill. No one had noticed their arrival yet, until a tall man with wavy hair looked to the side and waved towards them.

Players started taking notice of George and company, but were all taken aback by their expressions.

Expressions so filled with fear.

Wilbur frowned at the sight, as Dream walked towards him, the atmosphere tense and anticipated as players averted their eyes towards them.

"What's going on?" He asked, with seemingly the whole world listening into their conversation.

Whispers filled the air as Dream pondered on how to say it, onlookers confused as to what could have caused such a fuss.

He took a deep breath as he faced them "We don't have as much time as we thought we had." Dream replied. "Our guess is that the hunters have a base around 5000 blocks away from here."

Everyone seemed to be in horror at the new information gasps and murmurs filling the air. Wilbur let out a frustrated sigh, thinking carefully about what Dream had just said before shouting out a command.

"Change of plans, we head to the fortress tomorrow!"

And no one disagreed with him.

The original goal was to have everyone meet up in the forest. It was hundreds of thousands of blocks away from spawn so they had assumed they would have time to discuss strategy, and send some scouts in the fortress and quickly locate the spawners.

They could perfect a strategy before having the rest of the players enter, and train and catch up with one another.

But they didn't have the time.

Because the hunters were right by them.

And they were a large group of players, easily seen from hundreds of blocks away. And if their location was given away before they entered the fortress, it was game over.

A simple assassination at night would be enough to kill almost all of them.

And now George was filled with worry, as the once calm atmosphere had morphed into one of complete and utter panic.

He sighed resting his head on one of the nearby rocks. He didn't get much sleep the night before, too anxious to rest his eyes.

Because the prospect of death was too much for him to digest.

"George, you're here?"

He jolted up, slightly surprised to see Wilbur ask, trying to hide his shock.

George frowned. Wilbur shouldn't have known about his troubles getting in, seeing as though he logged into the server very early on. "What do you mean I'm here?"

"In the game." He clarified. "You're here?"

George awkwardly smiled. "Yeah, I am. Why?"

Wilbur looked away from him, as if stifling in a chuckle. "Nothing, I just didn't think you'd actually get in."

"Why's that?"

Wilbur again looked at George, biting his lip, holding in another expression of shock. "Oh, so you don't know."

He crossed his arms, raising an eyebrow. "Know what?"

Wilbur looked away. "Never mind."

"Tell me!" George whined, letting out an annoyed groan. He was tired and sleep-deprived, and wasn't willing to deal with his curiosity.

But Wilbur just laughed, completely ignoring him. "I don't know if that works with Dream, but it won't with me."

George feigned a pout, rolling his eyes. "Where even is he?"

"I'm pretty sure he's talking in codes to Illumina." He answered. "The rest of the players should be here tomorrow morning with 400 players."

George tilted his head. 400 players was certainly a lot, but he really didn't know if it warranted waiting for them.

Because each second here was risk.

And he didn't know if he was willing to take it.

"Why is everyone so scared of the fortress?" George asked nonchalantly. Of course he was scared, and that made sense since he was so new to the game, but to have people like Dream and Illumina

who have been here for months worry about it too felt unsettling to say the least.

Wilbur shot him a weird look, thinking he was out of his mind. "Have you not heard of the first time we found a fortress?"

George shook his head. "I haven't heard of anything apparently." He spat out.

Wilbur sighed, taking a seat next to George. He seemed tired too, and this game was obviously taking a toll on him.

"Well, we found a fortress about 3 months into the game." He explained, causing George to give off a confused expression.

"Wait if we already found a fortress so long ago the-"

"Let me finish." George moved back, nodding.

"We sent all our players there, Techno lead the army. Everything was going fine, a bunch of players had died to the skeletons, but that was to be expected. What we didn't expect was for those bastards to come out of no where."

George swallowed the air behind his throat, watching as Wilbur clenched his fists.

"We didn't know they had existed till then, but all of a sudden a few people started placing down those nether respawn thingy-"

"Respawn anchors." George clarified.

"Yeah those." He sighed. "Then they just started killing us, and since most of us didn't have diamond picks we couldn't break them. So we ended up just fighting, only for them to respawn, grab their stuff and go killing us again."

George felt his heart stop as he listened to Wilbur speak. His voice clearly trying so hard to hide the anger and malice.

"How many people died?" George asked, his tone earnest and sad, contrary to Wilbur's full of silent rage.

"5000." He replied, his head dropping. "There were only about 200 of them, but 5000 of us died, none of them did. That's where Techno died."

George's eyes widened in disbelief as Wilbur faked a smile in reassurance.

"He died so that we could live. He held them off while the rest of us left ran." Wilbur said, solemnly. "Some stayed back though, and joined them."

George could imagine how much it must've hurt. He knew Wilbur and Techno were close friends, and he didn't even want to think about losing his own.

Then he remembered what Sapnap had told him a while back, about people hating Dream for being alive, and suddenly wondered if Wilbur did too.

And before he could stop himself the words left his mouth.

"Do you hate Dream?"

Although he regretted saying it as Wilbur let out a forced laugh. "Funny question."

"It is, isn't it?"

He just watched as Wilbur let out a sigh, a tired smile plastered onto his face. "No, I don't think I do."

And for some reason George felt himself give off a sigh of relief.

"I don't even think I could, even if I wanted too. That green bastard's saved too many lives for such a treatment."

George looked at him in shock, wishing he'd be told more, but could only sigh in frustration as Wilbur's name was called out.

The name of the man who had now become head of what was once Techno's army.

"Anyways, since you didn't let me finish." Wilbur said, as he stood up. "This is our last chance to get those blaze rods. If we fail now then they're just going to break the spawners again, just like they did with the last fortress."

"Then we'll be back at square one, just with twice the amount of deaths."

George couldn't sleep that night.

He was exhausted, barely able to keep his eyes open, but he still couldn't sleep.

It was for the same reason as the night before, he was scared. He was filled with fear at the mere mention of the fortress, and the new information he now had certainly wasn't helping.

He peeked out from the bunker he slept in, lightly smiling at the sight of the torches.

No mobs could spawn, and he was ever so thankful for that.

He walked out into the forest, pulling out his diamond sword to practice hitting a tree when he noticed his friend sitting there, collecting his thoughts.

George couldn't see through the mask, and he probably would've thought he was asleep if it wasn't for the small gesture he did to have George sit next to him.

And he did, subtly leaning towards him.

They stayed quiet for a while, relishing in each other's company. Tomorrow they were headed to the fortress, and neither knew if they would make it out alive.

"You're still up?" Dream asked, his voice soft and quiet.

George held in a giggle. "Do I look like I'm sleeping?"

He sensed his friend roll his eyes under the mask, as shifted closer to him. "I can't sleep either."

George felt like he should've felt better, having his friend be in the same situation, that way he could confide in him about it. But in reality, George just felt a bit more frightened himself.

"Why do we have to go so soon!" He complained, desperate to change the topic, stretching out his words although he already knew the answer.

In all honesty he wished they could've delayed it. He wanted a bit more practice and planning to be done before they left, but they both knew that was too risky.

"It's because of time, George." Dream answered briefly, "We don't have enough time as we thought we did." He just nodded in response, as Dream let out a frustrated sigh. "We assume there are spies too."

George jolted up at the mention of it, and Dream lightly chuckled at his reaction, as if he had expected it. "We talked about it in the meeting, and there definitely are, maybe not from us but from the other bases. That's another reason why we need to move fast, so they don't get enough time to run back or find a way to tell all their friends."

He tilted his head at the new information, carefully processing it as he collected all the thoughts in his head.

It made sense that there were spies, they probably had some on their end too. He should've expected it, but he supposed the thought just hadn't crossed his mind.

He let out a sigh remembering what Wilbur had just told him earlier.

The hunters that came out of no where. That was what had killed everyone. That was what had killed Technoblade.

At least time they were a little bit more prepared.

"Why didn't you tell me about the first fortress?" He suddenly asked. It seemed so out of place in their conversation, but Dream just chuckled to himself too tired to question or deny it.

He was tired too, everyone was.

"You didn't ask." He replied. "Besides, I knew it would just pressure and scare you, I guess I was right." He sounded so smug, because all of it was true. "Who told you anyways?"

George silently debated whether or not to tell Dream, but just answered him knowing he wouldn't really do anything with the information. "Wilbur, he also said I didn't know something."

"And?"

"Aren't you going to tell me what it is?" He asked, playfully pretending to pout.

Dream lightly laughed. "I don't exactly know what 'it' you're talking about."

George pouted again, before letting out a sigh. "But there's so other much stuff you're not telling me Dream!"

"Like?"

"How am I supposed to know when you're not telling me!"

Dream stifled in a chuckle, as George followed suit. They both shared a laugh as George felt the tips of his eyelids fall, but the moment he tried to close his eyes he was immediately filled with thoughts of fear.

Images of his friend's being stabbed by wither skeletons.

Images of his friends being set of fire as they fought the blazes.

Images of Dream being killed protecting him as hunters rushed towards them.

He quickly opened his eyes again cursing under his breath, leaning back into the tree in frustration.

He had to keep reminding himself that Dream wouldn't die, that he was skilled, and that he'd be fine.

But Techno died, and he was sure people said the same things about him too.

Dream noticed his pulled him closer towards him, gently pushing George's head onto his shoulder.

"Get some sleep George, I know you didn't yesterday." He whispered.

He would've certainly blushing if he wasn't so tired, but instead he just leaned in further.

And when he closed his eyes again, he saw nothing, only feeling the comfort and warmth from his friend.

His face unconsciously formed into a smile as he slowly began drifting off into to sleep, the thoughts clouding his mind slowing dissipating. "Only if you start telling me things, only if you trust me." He mumbled out.

George could hear him chuckle beneath the mask, but his face held no expression. "If you say so."

"Promise me, Dream!" He whined, extending out his friend's name.

He didn't wait for his friend's response though, drifting off to sleep before he could even reply, leaving Dream to smile at his friend.

George seemed so peaceful finally gaining rest, clearly exhausted from the night before.

Dream leaned onto his friend gently clasping his hand. He sighed looking at his friend one more time before getting some rest himself.

"I'm sorry George, but if I promised you that, I'd be lying."

George anxiously stood in front of a portal the next day.

Beyond that was the nether, literal hell.

He watched as the players walked inside, and listened to the ominous noise it would omit before transporting the players into the other realm.

Everyone was to go in through the numerous portals one by one to avoid suffocation. They would meet again at the other end and then enter the fortress together.

George took in a deep breath in a desperate attempt to normalize his breathing.

Dream looked at him, and even with the mask on it wasn't hard to see the worry on his face.

"It's not too late to back out, ya know?" Sapnap said from behind them, and George frantically

shook his head in response.

He had made it too far to just walk away.

"Fuck you Sapnap, not happening." He retorted.

He glanced again at the portal, but immediately looked away, forcing a fixed expression.

Now was no time for second thoughts.

Dream instinctively clasped his friend's hands, immediately noticing the trembling he had hidden so well under his armor.

He squeezed it tighter, lightly stroking it with his thumb. "George, it'll be fine, I'll protect you."

Dream seriously doubted that. Due to their assigned roles, they were going to be separated in the nether, and both of them secretly dreaded it.

But he said it anyways and George found himself holding in a giggle, wondering how Dream could've blurted that out without laughing. He looked over at his friend, stunned at the fact that he could bring him so much comfort, despite being completely expressionless.

He eased his worries, a smile forming on his face.

"I know you will," George admitted, but took it back as a stupid smirk replaced it. "But I won't need it."

Dream let out a wheeze, rolling his eyes, as he used his free hand to playfully punch his friend. "You are an idiot."

And George just giggled back, freezing in place as he heard his name get called out.

It was his turn to go into the portal.

"Good luck." Sapnap called out, earning him a quick nod from George.

He stood up, and Dream followed after him not letting go of his hand.

"Dream, what are you doing?" He asked, hiding his amusement.

He chuckled, the smirk evident on his face as he pulled the mask up. "Do you want me to go with you?" He asked, although it wasn't exactly a question since he was already walking next to George.

He just laughed, leaning closer as they approached the portal.

George placed his hand through it, but quickly pulled it back out at the strange feeling it radiated.

It was almost nauseating, making his hand feel weak.

"You'll get dizzy since its your first time." Dream stated. "Just think about happy stuff and you should be fine."

He nodded as they both stepped onto the obsidian, facing one another as they made eye contact, if one could call it that.

George glanced once again at the mask, lightly tilting his head. "How the hell do you see through

that thing?"

Dream scoffed, "How do you distinguish colors? You're colorblind."

"Bullying the colorblind." George whispered to himself, causing Dream to laugh again.

He closed his eyes as the dizziness kicked in, gripping harder onto his friends hands. He then felt a headache, and winced at the pain quickly remembering his friend's advice.

"Think happy thoughts. Think happy thoughts. Think happy thoughts." He repeated to himself, but widened his eyes in disbelief as he realized something.

Why were all his happy thoughts just Dream?

GeorgeNotFound made the achievement [We Need to Go Deeper]

Chapter End Notes

This took up my entire Saturday, I really hope a 3k word chapter was worth it.

Also the blaze spawners being broken, I planned that shit before the manhunt, but now it sounds so unoriginal :(

Brace yourself for the fortress, just to let you know now slight TW (violence i guess) throughout the whole arc, but tbh I don't think it's that bad. Its super hard to write though, way out of my comfort zone, so I hope it'll be ok.

Last thing, no update this Friday. My math competition is already on Sunday and I'm super under prepared so I won't be able to write. Sorry about that!!

[also who found me on cait's stream]

Chapter 16

The nether was scorching hot.

As one would expect, but certainly not the most favorable of conditions.

George's first instinct was to complain, but he already knew that he would be shut down anyways.

"Nothing compared to Florida." Dream joked causing George to roll his eyes.

No, this was certainly worse than Florida.

George looked ahead of him and immediately spotted the fortress. It was almost impossible to miss, situated in the middle of a giant lava lake, to which many players were already bridging to.

Dream adjusted up his mask as he observed his surroundings. "This fortress location is shit." He commented, causing George to tilt his head as he looked at him.

"Why's that?" He asked.

"We might have to run out and retreat, but here's barely anywhere to go." He explained, pulling George away from the portal as players began stepping out of it. "Lava everywhere, easy to get cornered."

George gazed back up at the fortress, clasping onto his sword as he realized how big the thing was. It stretched through multiple biomes, the hallways already seeming like a maze from down below.

Like Dream had said, it was big, way bigger than a normal fortress should be.

Sapnap then stepped out of the portal, placing his hands on their shoulders from behind as he brought them into some sort of hug.

"They said to start going in George." He said, a little too cautiously as he pulled away, eyes focused on the fortress. "Everyone assigned to blazes is in already, we have to go."

George reluctantly nodded, as he pulled down his shades on his face to help see through the fog, his eyes gazing back at Dream.

Because he wasn't coming with him.

His job was to be stationed at the portal, ready to fight the incoming enemies that would be quick to flood in.

George looked longingly at his friend before being brought into a comforting hug.

One that lasted a bit longer than either would've liked to admit.

And when they pulled away George felt some sick feeling rise in his stomach.

"Sapnap, you better take care of George."

He laughed tightening his bandanna. "That's going to be pretty difficult, he's too much of an idiot."

George rolled his eyes, dramatically pulling down his goggles just so his friends could see.

Dream laughed, although it came out a little more forced than he would've liked. He gave George a reassuring smile as he looked towards the fortress.

"I'll make sure none of them reach you guys." He assured. "Just make sure you don't die to a blaze."

"I'm not going to die to a blaze!" George retorted, crossing his arms. He didn't plan to zone out here, it was far too important for that.

Sapnap raised an eyebrow at him, letting out a hollow chuckle. "I don't know about that George."

And they all burst into laughs.

Fake, forced, hollow laughs.

It was a desperate attempt to try and change the mood, one so full of uncertainty and fear.

Fear, that was all this game revolved around.

George and Sapnap walked over the lava bridge, George ever so slowly crossing it trying not to fall. He could feel the heat of the lava, and if it wasn't for the armor he probably would've passed out by now.

And as they crossed the bridge George glanced back again at the portal, watching as a new batch of players began flooding in.

Watching as Dream waved back at them.

Their job was to fight the hunters that would inevitably come, and from George's view he knew he'd only be able to watch.

He didn't exactly know which job was more dangerous, all he knew was that death was a risk everyone would just have to accept.

He sighed, as Sapnap helped him up the wall they dug into, digging upwards towards the fortress and winced as he saw the message appear in chat.

GeorgeNotFound made the achievement [A Terrible Fortress]

There was no going back now, no second chances, second thoughts.

Either in and out of the nether, or get killed.

"So Sapnap, any tips?" He asked in an attempt to change the mood, taking in his surroundings.

He just chuckled taking out his axe and shield. "For the Blazes, just make sure to block or dodge their attacks."

"And the wither skeletons?" George added, his head slightly tilted.

Sapnap gave off a sickening smile, as he faced his friend. "Those? Just avoid them."

George stepped back, wondering once again how it would feel to get the wither effect. Probably painful, he knew that much.

He looked back down from the hole in the wall they made, observing the players below, anxiously

watching Dream as he shouted out commands.

Their plan was simple.

Wilbur would shout out a speech from the other side, one so loud it would be heard by some of the hunters. Players would run in all directions, purposely exposing their name tags in hopes that they'd be followed. They would all type out easy to decipher codes and lure them towards the portal.

Then they would trap it, hoping the hunters would all respawn back at the main base, and lose their armor and weapons.

But their plan was extremely rushed.

For starters they didn't have time prepare the trap the days before, nor did they have the time to create an elaborate escape route. They weren't able to map out where the hunters were, and they weren't able to identify the spies from within them.

They were somehow out of time.

7 months of players being trapped in the game still wasn't enough.

George tensed up, as he gazed down at Dream, his heart sinking at the thought of him getting hurt. From up here in the fortress he'd have no control of that whatsoever. He just had to hope.

And he absolutely hated that.

Sapnap placed his hand on George's shoulder, his expression stained with pity.

"We have to go George." He said, pulling him away, and George nodded as he followed Sapnap down the hallway.

"Why couldn't Dream just come with us?" George complained, trying to contain his frustration.

He knew the answer though. It was simply that his skill at PvP would have just been wasted if he did. He hadn't fought blazes yet before, but had went against players dozens of times.

One option obviously made more sense than the other.

Too bad it was the one with the higher chance of getting killed.

But instead of taking the question seriously Sapnap just laughed. "Because if he did, he'd end up just going down on one knee as you two confessed your love."

George playfully frowned, lightly punching him in an attempt to wash off the smirk on his face.

Sure, he was blushing, but Sapnap didn't need to know that.

"And then you guys would start arguing like a married couple, and we wouldn't get anywhere." Sapnap trailed on.

"You're the worst." He replied, but was cut off as Sapnap gestured for him to stick his back onto the wall. And he did, watching as his friend peek over a corner in the hallway.

It was decently wide, far bigger than it would've been in an actual game of minecraft, but it seemed so familiar, as if it was just straight out of a regular fortress.

"There's a chest there, 2 blazes, a magma cube and a dead end." Sapnap announced as the atmosphere surrounding them changed. "It's worth it to go for the chest, but then again we'd have to kill the blazes anyways."

George was slightly surprised at the quick change of mood, never really seeing his friend so tense before.

He just nodded, pulling out his sword as he took a quick look at the mobs Sapnap had mentioned, and swallowed up his fear.

"George, I'll split up the magma cube and distract one of the blazes, you go kill the other one."

"The hell, I can take two blazes." George huffed, but he didn't disagree with him, as he ran in.

The mobs quickly spotted them, and George narrowly dodged the first attack the blaze fired. He hit the next one away with his sword, as Sapnap trailed behind him, luring in the magma cube as he prepped his axe.

George watched in awe as his friend landed a perfect critical hit, slicing the magma cube in half as countless more flooded out of it, but he just ran through them all, focusing on the blaze as it fired up shots.

The heat of the fire whizzed past him, as he tried desperately not get hit, weaving through the hall in an attempt to reach the mob, his sword lowered towards the floor. He ran right past the one attacking Sapnap, and eyed his target.

The blaze's weak spot was the head.

He just had to hit it.

But when he jumped up to land a critical strike, the mob dodged it, his sword instead hitting one of its rods, and he winced knowing that it would barely have done any damage.

The head, he needed to aim for the head.

The blaze then went up higher towards the ceiling as it prepared another shot, and George gripped tightly onto his sword ready to dodge it.

He moved towards the right, narrowly avoiding its shot. He was about to let out a sigh of relief when it suddenly attacked again, the fire hitting his chest plate.

But although his armor protected him, sparks of fire bounced off of it, burning his right arm.

"Fuck!" He yelled out, quickly glancing at burn before looking straight back at the blaze. Though it barely did any damage it was painful, and he was lucky not to be on fire. "Does this thing have aim-bot or something how the hell did it hit me?!"

"They're not stupid George, your next move was obvious!" Sapnap exclaimed, blocking mobs with his shield as he looked back to check on George. "Are you okay?"

George sent him a small nod, focusing back on the blaze, hovered above him.

He bit his lip, transferring the grip of his sword from both hands to his dominant and uninjured one, bluffing an attack from the right.

But as the blaze began charging, George switched directions, running straight towards it, and

getting underneath the mob. In the swift motion he jumped up, slicing through its rods and head from below, killing it.

A smile illuminated his face as he searched his surroundings for loot, but found himself frowning at the absence of a blaze rod.

Even after all that, it dropped nothing.

George cursed under his breath, turning to Sapnap who sent him a worried look.

"George, help me!" He pleaded, blocking his shield as tiny magma cubes surrounded him.

But George just let out a giggle. The blaze Sapnap was fighting was dead, and the remaining mobs were too small to do any real damage to him.

Still, he knew it would still cause at least some sort of pain, and walked over to help him out, helping him hit and kill the magma cubes.

Though they both found out that hitting mobs so tiny and small wasn't exactly easy, nor was it fun, and with Sapnap killing them in a single hit with his axe, and George taking two with his sword, he was starting to doubt his choice of weapon.

Right afterwards they both rested, as Sapnap searched through the chest.

"Anything in there?" George asked as he ate a pork chop, watching as his hearts regenerated and the wound on his arm slowly healed. "The stupid blaze didn't even drop a rod."

Sapnap smugly tossed him three diamonds, leaning on the wall to he regenerate his own health. "Yeah, but you better not die with those."

George rolled his eyes, taking in deep breaths as sweat dripped down his face.

Because holy shit was the nether hot, and he didn't know how Sapnap hadn't even mentioned it.

So he made it his personal goal to do it for him. Jokingly whining and complaining as they explored the fortress, avoiding as many mobs as possible.

"Sapnap, it's so hot!"

But his friend just shrugged him off, doing his best to ignore his constant complaints as they walked through the hallways. "Oh my God, stop being such a pussy, George!"

He playfully giggled in response, laughing at his friend's reaction.

George slowed down, as they walked past a fenced window, trying to get a glimpse of how his friends were doing.

More specifically to check on Dream.

But he found himself just frowning at the immense amount of fog, wishing he had Optifine.

And Sapnap noticed his, giving him a sympathetic smile as he pulled him away, chuckling to himself. "You're worried about Dream too?"

George looked back at him, slightly surprised. "And you are?"

"No, not me idiot." Sapnap corrected. "I meant that he keeps getting scared for you, just like you are for him."

George felt a smile tug on his lips at his friends words, as he let out a sigh, not bothering to hide it. "Then maybe yeah, I guess I'm worried for him."

Sapnap mimicked his expression, holding in a laugh, as he remembered what he had told Dream those weeks ago.

"But you trust him, don't you?"

George tilted his head at the obscure question. He normally wouldn't have put so much thought into it, if it wasn't for the way Sapnap had said it, the strange tone in his voice.

But the answer was obvious for him, wasn't it.

Dream was the one George would confide in.

Dream was the one who somehow made George smile no matter the situation.

Dream was his bestest friend, the one he wouldn't ever trade for the world.

So of course the answer was yes, he trusted Dream.

"Duh, I trust him, he's Dream. What are you even talking about?"

Sapnap sighed, placing his hands in his pockets as he continued walking, and although he was still smiling, it was as if his expression was tainted with hint of sadness. One George couldn't quite pinpoint nor explain.

He didn't reply, both of them focusing on the task at hand, as a message appeared on screen.

It was from Illumina, the only things on it being three distinct numbers.

They had found it.

The coordinates of the spawner.

George waited patiently as Sapnap towered over the lava, not wanting to rush him in fear of falling in.

He tapped his feet on the nether brick, as his friend bridged over toward the said coordinates.

They would've liked to just be able to travel there through the actual fortress itself, but the thing was like a maze, and after about an hour of trying to navigate through it, they just gave up and settled on this.

They tried travelling through the top of the fortress too, but the mobs spawned like hell up there, and neither were willing to risk an encounter they didn't need.

George ran across the newly built cobblestone bridge, now slightly more confident in his ability to not fall off, as he went through chat again.

The message Illumina sent was meant to be rigged, they all agreed to mess up the location by

adding specific numbers to each direction, that way the hunters wouldn't be able to find them and they'd be able to broadcast the announcement.

So George just sat there, redoing the math as Sapnap started building another bridge.

"How many more blocks, George?"

He frowned back at him, counting the numbers in his head. "We should still be going in the right direction, only a few hundred blocks away from here."

Sapnap grunted as he faced his friend, borderline whining. "Can you bridge? I'm tired."

But he just stood there, ignoring him as he continued to scroll through the feed.

Because neither of them actually believed he'd be able to bridge properly without messing up, not even George himself.

And as he read the messages he got from his friends he noticed something strange.

The code to say the trap was successful wasn't there. Dream had promised to send it to them as soon as the players joined in, but George couldn't find it.

It was supposed to his indication that Dream was safe, and that everything had went according to plan.

But it wasn't there.

"Hey Snapmap," George said, catching his friend's attention. "Dream's message isn't here yet, didn't they say to expect the hunters to arrive at this time?"

"Don't call me that." He replied, still keeping his focus on his task, not bothering to think too much of it. "And yeah, its what we expected. But things never really go according to plan do they?"

The Brit agreed with him, but still couldn't shake off the feeling that it was a bit weird.

And as he scrolled further through his messages he watched as the first death messages appeared.

He didn't express any fear though, expecting them as an inevitable part of this game.

Besides he couldn't afford to zone out now.

But there was something strange about them, and it was the fact that the messages all showed that they were killed by other players.

Killed by other players, who should've already went through a trap that apparently hadn't been triggered yet.

George cursed under his breath, worry once again growing within him.

"I think the trap failed." He sighed, causing Sapnap to pause slightly before continuing to bridge. "They're already here, but Dream's message isn't."

"Damn it." Sapnap muttered out, but his tone was quiet, and he didn't bother thinking too much about it.

And George sighed, wondering what was going on down there. Wondering if all his friends were

safe, and wondering if Dream had gotten hurt.

Although he supposed worrying would've been a better word.

And as George crossed Sapnap's new bridge, his friend caught a glimpse of his expression.

"Dream will be fine." Sapnap reassured again, causing George to fake him a smile.

He bit his lip, faking a laugh. "I know that."

But his lie was so easy to see through.

George's eyes lit up as they reached an open part of the fortress, the roof was gone, making their surroundings easier to see through, making it seem slightly less like a maze.

Though there were far more mobs than earlier, and that risk didn't exactly feel like the best pay off.

They continued to travel towards Illumina's coordinates, this time in a run to avoid all the hostile creatures.

But George suddenly came to a stop as he made out name tags in the distance.

"Sapnap, it's over there!"

His friend turned around, his expression changing into a smile as they ran towards it, screaming a bunch of yells in victory.

But as George squinted his eyes towards all the players he noticed some strange things.

For starters there was a new nether portal, right by the spawner area.

The players were fighting one another, many being pushed into the lava as others got stabbed with swords.

And the blaze spawner wasn't there. It had been broken.

George pulled Sapnap back, as he slowed his footsteps, his heart racing, and breath hitching.

Because the hunters, they were right there.

They fucked up.

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

TW// Violence I guess

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They ran.

Panic flooding through them as the severity of their situation sank in.

Because their plan had failed.

They ran back towards the safety of the roofed area, staying a safe distance away from the fight and squatting to hide their name tags.

Sapnap began quickly typing in an emergency message in chat as George broke open a hole in the wall observing the fight.

The hunters had found their coordinates and built a portal to that exact location in the overworld.

It was another surprise attack one that was certainly successful as George noted the numerous deaths.

They appeared out of nowhere, killing the players near their newly made portal and breaking the spawner.

They were outsmarted.

Again.

"How the fuck did they crack our code?" George managed to ask through his breaths.

His friend grunted, the stress rising through him as he sent out the warning. "The spies, George. I don't know how the hell they were able to relay the info back to them, but we were probably just careless."

George winced, the heat of the nether getting to him as his hands began sweating.

He looked back over at what was once the spawner, watching in horror at the blood bath it was.

A part of him wanted to run in, a part of him wanted to try and save them.

But that would have just been a death wish, and he knew it.

"Back up is on it's way." Sapnap said, briefly. "100 players are staying by the trap in case they try going through it, the rest are headed here."

George nodded, a new sense of relief washing over him.

Still, it would take 30 minutes at the least for them to arrive, and they really were short on time.

"How do we know who can respawn?" He asked, already anticipating a fight.

Sapnap didn't look back at him, his eyes focused on the players as he tried making out their names. "You'll be able to tell from the way they fight. How recklessly they attack you."

And as they waited George fiddled with his sword, his heart pounding on his chest as he digested the situation around him.

The players at the spawner began scattering, most of them were dead, and the others were being chased as they ran away.

And George felt that same fear in his chest rise once again.

Because those hunters had only two goals.

To break the spawners.

And to kill them all.

"Listen George," Sapnap said, turning to face him, but George shivered at the eye contact, his friend's expression being so serious and cold. "We need to find another blaze spawner and fast, before they do."

He stood up, revealing his name tag, as he surveyed all the directions.

"We haven't explored that way yet so I thin-"

He was cut off by an attack from above, someone who broke a hole in the roof above them and dropped down to attack him with his sword.

There was no time to react as the attack landed, bouncing off of his armor, but lightly grazing the skin on his arm.

Sapnap winced, watching as his health went down. He quickly brought out his shield and axe, as George frantically stood up.

The hunter was in full enchanted iron, but dawned a diamond chestplate, and the largest, most obnoxious looking sword George had ever seen.

And from the cocky smirk on his face, George could just assume he was skilled.

Sapnap took a step back, ignoring his new wound as he protectively stood in front of his friend. His expression so painfully cold and angry as he stared straight at the man in front of him.

Because Sapnap despised those hunters more than anything else in the world.

It was so easy to tell by the way he looked at them, by the way he spoke about them. He was trapped here against his will, and his girlfriend was waiting for him on the other side.

To most people Sapnap wouldn't be perceived as a victim, for his skills and the way he hides everything with jokes and smile. It would've been easy to assume he didn't mind being here, and that the adrenaline was enough.

But Dream wasn't the only one to wear a mask.

And George could tell, more than anything that Sapnap wanted to be freed. He'd put his own life

on the line as many times as it would take.

That's why this fortress was so important to him. This was his last shot. It was all of their's last shot.

If they failed, it was game over.

Either get trapped here for eternity, or death.

But as George bottled up his fear, moving forward to take a stand next to his friend, who just pushed him back.

"Sapnap, the hell are you okay?" He asked, catching the attention of the hunter, whom at reading George's name burst into fits of laughter.

But his laugh was not that of any sane person, and George could make out scars on his face behind the gas mask he wore.

And the scars didn't really seem like a part of his skin.

He didn't recognize the player's username, but from his friend's stance he could tell Sapnap did.

"Xeno" George read out loud, causing the man in front of him to be thrown back into a continuous spree of a chilling laughter.

Whatever the fuck this game did to him, George didn't want to find out.

"George. Not. Found." He countered, the tone of his voice terrifying him.

George looked to his friend for reassurance, but he didn't receive any. Instead Sapnap, calmed his breaths ready to engage. He held out his weapon, straightening his stance as he shot his friend an urgent look. "George, run."

"What?"

"You heard me, run and get the fuck out of here!" He snapped, blocking his shield as 'Xeno' attacked him. "He wants to kill you!"

And although George questioned it, he followed his friend's orders and took off.

His hands were shaking, and his endurance was slowly starting to break, but he ran.

George took a glance behind him, his breath hitching as he watched Sapnap fight the hunter.

He debated running back, to help fight the hunter with his friend, but thought against it when he noticed how the hunter wasn't aiming to kill Sapnap.

The way he moved just proved it. He was only trying to push past him.

Only to get to George.

So he could kill him instead.

He shook his head as he continued running, questions flooding his mind.

And as he ran through the fortress, he realized one key issue.

He was alone, and there was no one to save him from the wither skeletons that were running straight at him.

George had the wither effect.

He winced as he surveyed the wound. The blood seeping out of it was pitch black, feeling like burning fire on his skin that kept igniting over and over again.

He took slow, deep, breaths over and over again, just like Dream had advised him to, trying to put away the pain as he closed his eyes.

It hurt.

It hurt like hell.

George held onto his upper right arm where the wound was, trying to stop the bleeding, but it only made the pain worse.

He watched in panic as he slowly began losing his hearts, one by one. It was certainly at a slower pace than the actual minecraft, but he had no clue how long the effect would last.

He eyed the wooden wall he made to separate himself from the wither skeletons on the other end of the corridor, holding his breath as he listened to the clanking of their bones.

He had ran approximately a thousand blocks away, and those things just didn't stop chasing him the entire way. When he ran out of hunger and had to quickly eat, they were able to wound him, and although it initially didn't do too much damage, George should've known the wither effect would've caused problems.

And now they were only a few blocks away from him, barely being separated by a makeshift wall he had built with the few extra blocks he had.

He gritted his teeth again at the wound, frowning as he touched the black liquid which seemed too thick to be blood at this point. He winced again at a sudden burst of burn like pain as he checked his health, blackened by the wither effect.

7 hearts.

And it was only going down by the minute, leaving George with no clue as to how to end it.

"Come on, come on, fucking stop already!" He panicked to himself, but could only wince as the wound opened wider.

He was about to search his inventory for any items to stop the bleeding but stopped in his tracks as he heard footsteps.

A hunter.

And George could easily guess who it was.

He brought out his sword, holding it with his dominant hand, just hoping his injury wouldn't bleed too much.

Hearing the sounds of the skeletons get killed, George held his breath. This man had dealt with it

so easily, like it was nothing, and that terrified him.

George took a step back as the man broke open the wall, his same obnoxious looking netherite sword, pointed right at his neck.

Taking a good look at the hunter, he seemed to be at around his own age, maybe younger. He was certainly taller than George, but only by a little bit and besides the gas mask he wore from what George it was all complete black.

And he was also completely and utterly insane, George could tell that much.

He lunged forward, and George quickly blocked it with his sword before distancing himself, feeling the pain in his wrist from the force of his attack.

His eyes darted towards his hotbar at the strange sound his sword made at the impact. He checked the slot of his weapon and gasped in shock.

Because countering that one attack had taken up almost half of his sword's durability.

Meaning he couldn't block attacks.

He had to dodge, all of them.

He gritted his teeth, as the man in front of him let out that same chilling laugh.

"You're really lucky to have noticed that." He taunted, carelessly walking towards him. He didn't bother protecting his front with the sword, giving George an opportunity to strike.

And he did, running towards him trying to lunge at him with his weapon, but the attack was blocked, causing the durability of his sword to drop again.

George frowned at this player's skill, suddenly feeling worry for his friend. "Where's Sapnap?" He asked, trying to hide the fear in his tone.

The hunter looked unfazed, as if the question didn't matter to him. "Is that your friend?"

George cautiously nodded. This man didn't even seem to be taking the whole thing seriously, his stance being so careless and open.

"Left some other people to deal with him, kind of wanted to kill you."

George let out a sigh of relief at those words, noting that Sapnap was not dead as the hunter reached forward, recklessly swinging his sword.

The attacks were slow, but just quick enough to prevent George from moving anywhere but back, as he frantically dodged the hits.

If he blocked his weapon would break.

If he blocked he'd just be unarmed, an easy target.

As if he wasn't one already.

Because he was wounded, wielding a half broken sword, and completely alone.

George tried to look for an opening but the sheer size of his opponent's sword was almost

impossible to get around without getting hit.

Xeno swung his sword again, and George just narrowly dodged it.

It should've been plausible to win the fight, but the man in front of him wasn't even trying, and George was just struggling to stay alive.

So he kind of knew he was fucked.

He noted the man's skill, to be able to wield such an obviously heavy weapon and still hit so precisely, so effortlessly. The mere fact of the matter being with players like this, the game should've already been beaten.

This man didn't need to respawn, he wasn't going to die in the first place under the normal circumstances of the game. He was skilled enough to stay alive.

And the words left George's mouth before he could stop them.

"Why the fuck, would you still be on their side?"

The man suddenly stopped, eerily processing the question, before a sickening smirk appeared on his face. "Come again?"

George frowned, the anger rising within him. "You don't need to respawn, you're not going to die. What are you even doing this for?!"

The man dropped his stance, laughing to himself in a fit of insanity. But his laugh was so furious, so full of rage.

"Think of it like this, you know how time works faster here right?"

George nodded, remaining careful in his stance, as he held his sword, and the man seemed almost amused at his fear.

"Well, as long as our physical bodies stay alive, and as long as we don't die here we, live. Taking it that way, if I never die in the game, I would live around seven times longer than I would in the real world."

He said it as if the answer was so obvious, as if it made just too much sense and that it was so plain and simple, but George just gritted his teeth at the selfishness of that statement.

"Trading the lives of players for your own gain." George whispered to himself in disgust, but the hunter caught on to this, and his face dropped into a frown.

He walked over to George as he switched out his sword, bringing out a small knife-like weapon as he approached him. "There's one more reason." He said, his mouth curving back into a wicked smile.

George frowned as the wither effect burned his skin again, and he watched as the black liquid continued to drip out of it, causing him to lose more health.

He had to end this fight fast, or through time the effect would just kill him.

The Brit feigned a brave look, searching his surroundings for an escape as he spoke to the hunter in order to distract him. "And that is?"

"To kill Dream."

George's face immediately morphed into a mortified expression of shock, as he took a step back, his breathing quickening and his heart racing.

This crazy lunatic had the goal of killing his best friend.

The hunter laughed at his, fiddling his knife before facing George.

"And what a perfect way to start on that by killing you, GeorgeNotFound." He taunted, and before George could even register it, he had thrown his dagger right at the wound.

George yelled in pain, as the cut deepened, and the black liquid began oozing out of his arm at a rate he couldn't control.

He was starting to hyperventilate as he felt another pang of pain, wincing as the rate of the burns sped up. He grasped onto the dagger trying to pull it out, but it was pierced onto his armor, and there was no way to remove it without causing more injury.

And then it burned him again, but it wasn't necessarily on the wound, it almost felt as if the pain was coming from within him.

From the very core of his heart.

And his health was dropping by the second as the speed of the damage increased, leaving him to panic as he stared at his hotbar.

5 and a half hearts.

As another burst of pain followed, he let out a pleading scream, leaning on to the wall as his health continued to drop.

And the hunter just watched him, seemingly enjoying the whole ordeal.

George winced, clutching onto his arm as tears welled up in his eyes.

It was painful, it was so horribly painful.

The tears, they fell again as fear flooded through his mind.

Because he was going to die, and there was no one to save him.

The hunter walked up to him, grabbing onto the dagger with a playful grin on his face as he deepened the cut, laughing to himself.

George closed his eyes, barely able to keep a steady breathing pattern as his hearts dropped even faster, the burns in his chest happening over and over again.

Xeno twisted the knife, causing more blood to spill out, as George kicked him away with as much force as he could. He backed himself onto the wall, the tears blocking his vision.

He didn't want to die.

But his hearts were dropping at a rate faster than he could stop, and the pain was beginning to engulf his whole body.

He couldn't fucking die.

But he couldn't fight the hunter either, he couldn't even walk to try and run away.

He rested his head on the nether brick, closing his eyes in an attempt to stop himself from sobbing.

He had to live.

Dream was waiting for him.

George let out another yelp in pain, as his hearts dropped again.

3 hearts.

The hunter brought out his netherite sword once more, walking towards George as he lifted the weapon above him, right over his head.

But he didn't immediately strike, relishing in the fear George emitted as he seemingly taunted him.

Once he dropped down that blade, George was dead. Plain and simple, it was over.

But he couldn't accept that, not yet. Not when he had so many unanswered questions.

Questions about Dream.

Questions to which deep down he knew the answer.

He just had to admit it to himself.

George rolled to the side, narrowly dodging Xeno's attack, as the man chuckled at his attempt to escape.

As George tried to get on his legs and run, he felt a sudden pang in his body as his hearts dropped further. He dropped onto the ground again, clutching his arm as the blood poured out of it.

And when Xeno lifted his sword again, George shuffled to the side, in a desperate attempt to avoid the attack.

But they both knew it was no use, and when the hunter slashed down his sword at him George just found himself bracing for the impact, closing his eyes as he lost control of his emotions.

Maybe his armor would be enough to save him on a heart. Maybe the hunter would miss. Maybe the wither effect would just wear off.

There was no longer anything George could do but hope.

Hope, because he wasn't ready to die.

George gritted his teeth as he awaited the pain of a sword being stabbed into his stomach.

But the pain never came, and instead George only heard the sound of his opponent's sword dropping onto the floor, followed by another laugh of insanity.

Only this laugh was more filled with anger, more targeted and drenched in vermin.

And when George opened his eyes to assess the new situation, he gasped as he noticed the sword, pierced into the hunter's body.

The laughter echoed through the hall, as the sword was pulled out of stomach, causing the man to fall onto the ground as he whispered a few words through his laughter.

"I'll just respawn anyways."

And suddenly he disappeared, his items scattering all over the floor, leaving George to sit there in shock as a new message appeared in chat.

Xeno was slain by Dream.

Chapter End Notes

I hate this bitch too. I suck at naming things if u can't tell, and holy shit was this hard to write. I dont usually like OCs, but i didn't wanna make someone we know this lunatic.

I hope this wasn't written poorly, I'm new to these kinds of scenes.

Also, sorry school's getting to me, and chapters have been getting longer, so I don't think I'll be able to keep up with twice a week. On the weeks like this one where in I only post one chapter what day of the week do you all want? Monday or Friday or like smth else.

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

2 and a half hearts.

George was only a few seconds away from dying.

He was so close.

It was as if the experience was taunting him, dangling it in his face every time he tried to think about anything else.

Because he knew if it weren't for his friend, it would have been the end.

It would've been game over.

"Dream-" He winced, closing his eyes as his friend carefully covered up the wound. It was still painful, definitely, but he knew he was doing his best to stop the bleeding. He gritted his teeth as his friend slowly pulled out the dagger.

But Dream's hands were shaky, and he was frightened. George was so close to losing his life, but Dream was just as close to losing his best friend.

And to him, that was far more important.

Then he was angry.

He was pissed at the hunter who did this to him, the one who had made George go through all of that, the one who had almost killed him.

And he was furious at George for messing up, for putting his life in danger. For his stupid risky actions. But he bottled it up, holding in his words as he focused on the task ahead of him.

The moment Dream pulled out the weapon, blood began pouring out of it, and he rushed to cover it up, ripping off the sleeve of his hoodie and wrapping the cloth around his friend's injury.

They sat across each other on the floor of the fortress, as George rested his head on the wall, clutching onto his arm, as Dream searched through his inventory.

"Dream, why'd you use your hoodie? The hell- you look so stupid without the other sleeve," George said, frowning. He was grateful though, the wound hurt a lot less, and he couldn't feel those burns inward anymore.

Dream laughed in an attempt to lighten the mood. "The game is coded to keep skins intact no matter what, the sleeve will probably reappear soon." He explained, pulling out a golden apple and handing it to George. "Eat this, you need to regenerate your health."

George mumbled a thanks as he took the fruit, taking a bite out of it and watching his hearts rise up. They were still black though. He still had the wither effect.

"How come you had one? It probably would've been pretty useful if I had it earlier." He said, trying to hide his gratitude.

"They didn't have enough to hand out. We could only give some to those who were planning to fight the hunters. It backfired though, we messed up."

George tilted his head as he continued to eat, more so relishing the taste than for actual purpose. It tasted like a real apple. George loved apples, only this time, it was richer and more flavorful. "You do have extra ones right?"

"No, that's my only one."

George frowned, pulling away the fruit as he debated giving it back to his friend. It was supposed to be his safety net in case his health got low, and he had already saved George once in the nether. "My health is high enough, you should have the rest just in case."

Dream sighed, his expression visible under his mask. "Don't feel guilty, you need it more."

"No, I don't. I'm fine, take it," he said, practically shoving the half-eaten fruit up Dream's face.

"George, just finish the fucking fruit, you already bit out of it. That's disgusting."

"Dream, I don't even need it anymore."

Dream raised an eyebrow, although it wasn't even visible, and tilted his head. Smugly eyeing his friend. "Really? How many hearts are you at?"

George didn't respond, looking away as he formulated his response. "E-enough okay? But it's yours, you'll need it."

"George, there's barely anything left."

"I shouldn't have eaten your gapple in the first place."

"But I gave it to you."

"Well, you shouldn't have done that, either!"

He pushed his friend away, laughing at George's pouting expression as a thought popped up in his mind. His face immediately shifted back into a smirk as he held in his wheeze.

"Fine, but who's going to tell Sapnap we were indirectly kissing?"

George stifled a giggle, feigning annoyance as he took another bite off of the fruit, rolling his eyes and dropping the topic.

That was something only a child would say, and yet it somehow didn't fail to amuse him.

Dream was a child.

Dream was an idiot.

"Never mind, fuck you."

Dream's smirk widened as he searched through Xeno's stuff, while George continued to watch his health rise up.

Still, even with the golden apple, it was horribly slow, and he was still at eight hearts.

Eight blackened hearts.

"When is this stupid wither effect going to wear off!" George complained, worriedly eyeing the bandage. The wound wasn't exactly bleeding anymore, but it certainly hadn't stopped. The black liquid was still barely seeping out of the cloth, and the mere thought of another burn scared him.

Dream took another look at his friend's injury, sighing to himself. "You do know how the wither effect works here, right?" George nodded. "It causes you to bleed out an infinite amount of black blood, the more that pours out the faster you lose hearts."

It made sense; it's how the hunter managed to speed up the effect so much by deepening the cut, but George winced at his friend's words, dreading the pain that came with losing just half a heart. "And the faster it burns," he added.

The masked man gave his friend a sympathetic look, watching as George tried to hide how uncomfortable he was with the whole situation. At any moment his arm could bleed a bit too much and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

It was only a matter of luck, a matter of time.

"How come the effect isn't over yet!" George whined.

"Wither effect is busted, that shit lasts for like a day without milk." Dream answered, standing up as he went through the rest of the stuff. "We were supposed to go out and get some, but we were rushing, sorry I couldn't get you any."

"At least you found me, I should've been dead by now," he said, but the way he spoke made it seem like just admitting to it was like swallowing a pill.

Dream didn't bother denying his statement though, because even if it made George feel better about himself, it would just give him a false sense of confidence.

George didn't need that. He was being risky enough.

"How did you know where I was, though?" George asked.

"Sapnap was panicking when I saw him, he told me to rush to you." Dream explained. "I squinted and saw your name tag, and just ran I guess."

George perked up at the sound of Sapnap's name, a sense of relief flooding him. "He's okay right, not dead or anything?"

"He's not that bad, George." Dream laughed. "I know I joke about him being shit all the time, but he'll be fine."

He tilted his head, holding in a laugh. "I don't know about that, Sapnap's pretty trash." He joked. "And how did you even navigate the fortress- it's like a stupid maze in here."

"I used to speedrun George, it generates in a similar manner, just bigger. And I know my way around a fortress." He answered smugly, earning a light punch from the Brit.

"Geez Dream, if you were just *that* good at finding stuff, couldn't you have just gone with us?" George asked. It was meant to be played off as a joke, but they both knew he genuinely meant the

question.

Because Dream would've protected him.

And he wouldn't have had to suffer through all of that.

Dream stayed quiet for a bit, running a hand through his hair. "I guess I'm just better at PvP."

"No way you're *that* good." George retorted, playfully furrowing his eyebrows, but his friend didn't bother replying, instead focusing on sorting through Xeno's stuff.

And George walked over to help him out, but he could barely concentrate, his thoughts plagued with the fight he had just had.

Every time he just so much as thought of that hunter, his mind was filled with fear.

Because that lunatic was going to respawn.

And then he was going to try to kill them.

Try to kill Dream.

George remembered the way Sarnap had looked at him, an expression so full of anger and fear it was impossible that that was their first encounter. And from his friend's overall demeanor and disposition, he could tell he did too.

"This Xeno guy, who is he?" He asked.

Dream didn't bother looking back at his friend as he took the man's sword and placed it in his inventory. "Some crazy general the hunters have. I've crossed paths with him before, don't think he likes me very much."

"He wants to kill you apparently."

Dream scoffed at this, placing his hands in his pockets. "Yeah, I figured. He's not the only one."

George had expected a statement like that to be said with at least a small sense of pride, especially coming from Dream. It should have been a testament to his skill that so many people wanted his head.

But he only radiated fear.

He was terrified to always have to be on edge.

His life was in constant danger no matter what.

It was always in his conscience, eating away at him anytime he tried thinking about something else.

He hid it so well though, and George was only barely able to see a glimpse of his emotions, before he covered it up again. "I know he's good though, we're lucky to have caught him distracted."

"Distracted by stabbing me."

Dream let out a hollow laugh, picking up the rest of the stuff. "He's fucking crazy." He said, as George watched him waiting for another response. "That's it; he's just insane."

“And why does he want to kill you?” George continued. He could guess the answer, or at least the practical one.

But the way he said it, the way the hunter’s voice was so drenched in anger, filled with venom, it made George feel it was just a bit more personal.

And Dream confirmed it as he choked on his words, looking away. “N-no idea.”

That was definitely a lie. If he were telling the truth, being good at the game should’ve been reason enough.

It should’ve been, that's what George had guessed, but his friend didn’t bother saying anything after, and the way he looked away just confirmed George’s suspicions.

But he knew he wasn’t going to be getting any answers from him, Dream was always so secretive, so reluctant on telling things. And just from the tone of his voice he could tell this was one of those things.

One of many things Dream wasn’t telling him.

And George didn’t bother asking about it anymore, too tired to bother.

So the two sat in silence, waiting for George's health to go back up.

Only it wasn't exactly comfortable.

Because both just wanted to stall the inevitable fate that was the countless deaths.

But they couldn't back out now. If they did, the other blaze spawners would just be broken.

Then they'd be stuck.

Stuck in this death game, in an endless cycle of fear and loss.

"We have to go George." Dream finally said, breaking the atmosphere as he stood up, extending out his hand to his friend. "You're at full health right?"

George nodded as he faked a smile, pushing away his hand and standing up. "Yeah, we should head back there now."

Head back to the bloodbath.

And although George put up a brave face, Dream could tell it was just a facade; after all, he wore a fake smile too, everyone did.

Everyone.

Everyone was trapped in this game.

Everyone had to suffer through the pain of an injury, the throbbing sting that came with a burn.

Everyone could die.

That was a reality they all had to accept.

The only difference was that they joined in willingly. They both had a choice, and chose to risk

their lives for this.

They put themselves in this situation.

Dream shifted towards his friend, his own hand lightly grazing his. "Are you sure you're okay, George?"

No, of course not.

He had almost died.

Just some minutes ago he was on the verge of death; he had a dagger pierced into his arm and a wither effect that was slowing killing him.

One that still hadn't worn off. An injury that was just taunting him, waiting to burn him once again.

He should be dead.

If it weren't for Dream, he wouldn't even be alive anymore.

He felt like a cheat, one that was just narrowly, barely avoiding death. While others were suffering that fate, he was just lucky.

And he was terrified.

He just absolutely hated that feeling, but it followed him wherever he went.

He was doubting his skill, his confidence, his own choice to even be here.

Then there were the questions.

Some were just normal ones, about the players, their situation, and their odds.

But then there were those strange ones, about how his heart would race around his best friend, or why he always felt so tempted to look through that stupid mask.

And part of George just wanted to stop. A part of him just needed to break down and let it all out.

There were tears threatening to flow down, there were words that he wanted to—*needed* to say.

His hands were shaking, and he was so desperate for the warmth and comfort from his friend.

But he had to ignore all of that.

There were lives at stake, their freedom was at stake. There was too much on the line.

So he gave Dream a nod, sighing to himself as he gave off another smile. "Yeah, I'll be fine," he lied. But his voice was faltering, and his brave tone was cracking as the numerous death messages popped up in chat.

His insecurities were taunting him, the game was getting to him.

But he had to put it all aside for now, pretend it was nothing, pretend he was fine.

"No, you're not." Dream countered, closing the distance between them. "Are you sure you don't want to talk about it first?"

George shook his head, a genuine smile finding its way to his face. "We can't right now, we need to hurry. Maybe later."

That's right. They'd just deal with it later.

Hopefully they'd make it that far.

Chapter End Notes

ANNOUNCEMENT

So I have two editors/beta readers now, and they helped out alottt with all the grammar errors etc. They didn't have to help me and just volunteered to do it, so it means a lot that they would, and they are super nice too lol.

<https://archiveofourown.org/users/KeitieKalopsia/pseuds/KeitieKalopsia>

<https://archiveofourown.org/users/amywaited>

Shoutout to them, they helped me out so so muchhh (theres another guy whos fully editing, but he doesn't have ao3 so i can't credit him here lol)

Also the final update schedule as of right now is every MONDAY so yeah

Also they introduced me to rich text which is the biggest blessing in the entire world holy crap.

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The portal.

Situated right where the blaze spawner was, where it should've been.

George watched as the players ran in and out of it, allies he assumed, surrounding the portal as if they were guarding it.

Whatever was going on in the other end, he had no idea, and Dream noticed this.

"They're fighting in the overworld," he explained, although George only frowned in an attempt to tell Dream that that told him nothing.

"Over?"

"The beds. We're trying to break their beds so they can no longer respawn nearby. Beds can only be placed in the overworld, and we're trying to keep the hunters there. Pretend we're focused on only destroying them," he said, leaning towards George. "It's a loop, we kill them, and they just respawn back there. Over and over until we get their beds."

George nodded, finally making sense of the situation, but it was cut short as more players began running out of the portal, many with lethal injuries.

Wounds that just seemed painful.

And pain just brought back trauma. Trauma from his still black hearts, and the barely patched up wound.

"We outnumber them, but all their best players can respawn." Dream sighed. "And we can't even send all of our players there, the other half are dealing with trying to find another blaze spawner."

"And which half are we in?"

Dream didn't even bother thinking about the question, quickly answering him. "Blaze spawners."

To Dream it was the obvious answer. It was the easier one. It was the safer one.

He was not leaving George alone, and he certainly was not going to let him get into another fight with the hunters.

But George just hummed in response, keeping his eyes on the injured players as they were brought to a makeshift medical station.

Because unlike those hunters, their lives mattered.

Unlike those hunters, they couldn't even risk being below four hearts.

"If we can keep them away from the nether we should be fine. That'll give us the chance to look around safely," Dream added. "Only we have to do it fast, they can't be held off for very long, and while our numbers are limited, theirs is technically infinite. If they have enough time, we'll be the

ones at a disadvantage."

George tilted his head, processing the information.

They had to kill all the hunters to actually be safe. They had to break all the beds to even proceed to do that.

But they outnumbered them.

How hard could that be?

"They can't *all* respawn Dream. It shouldn't be that hard." He commented, but he was quickly shut down.

"Yeah, but all the good ones can. Plus they can be as risky as they want, as for the rest of us, we're not willing to die."

He reluctantly nodded, trying not to make eye contact with his friend.

For he knew Dream's stressed out, worried expression would only make him feel worse.

He wanted to believe they were at an advantage. He wanted the relief from knowing they had the upper hand.

But they both knew they didn't.

George shifted his eyes toward the medbay, surrounded in cobblestone, and situated right by the portal.

Unlike the actual real minecraft, everything seemed to go at a much slower pace.

Most players there were just eating food, waiting for their health to regen as others, presumably medics, were bandaging up the rest with leaves or paper.

Dream approached them, dragging George along by the hand, walking past most of the players as they approached a blonde girl, her hair reaching behind her back.

She seemed to be in command, giving out orders, as players scrambled to keep up with the amount of injuries. And George could easily see she was in some sort of panic, and that the pressure was getting to her.

But the pressure was getting to all of them anyways.

"Nihachu, I need you to check on George really quick." Dream said, letting go of his hand as he began to walk towards the other direction. "I'm gonna go talk to Illumina, fix the wound. George, he got withered."

It almost seemed as if he hesitated to say the last part as they parted ways, Nihachu donning a worried expression as she faced George, pulling him towards one of the corners as she surveyed the injury.

And as she began to patch it up, George noticed her take worried glances behind her, seemingly unable to focus on her task.

It was like she was choking on her words, debating on what to say as she drowned in guilt.

"S-sorry, we don't have any milk."

That was a lie.

From the way her voice faltered, it was so easy to tell she most likely had at least a bucket in her inventory which George just presumed she was saving for herself.

It made sense, he wouldn't have faulted anyone for it. No one would've liked to risk it, and he just shrugged it off, noting that any normal person would've done the same.

But then he noticed her take yet worried peek behind her, and suddenly felt curious as to what she was looking at. He glanced over her shoulder in shock, suddenly recognizing her name and making sense of the situation.

Because across him sat an injured WilburSoot, clutching onto his leg while players rushed to patch up the wound. To stop the black blood that was pouring out of it.

And he immediately understood, smiling to himself as he went to face her again.

She was choking on her own guilt, her own guilt for wanting to save someone and leave someone else behind. For prioritizing someone she cared so much for.

It was so familiar to him.

"Don't feel guilty, give the milk to Wilbur, his cut is bigger, he needs it more." George said, causing the girl to jump back in shock.

She shook her head, forcing a smile. "Thanks, I'm sorry. It's just he-"

"It's fine," he assured her. "I probably would've done the same."

For who?

Well, he supposed he knew the answer to that.

Their conversation ended shortly after, with his wound being patched up and Nihachu running back to Wilbur and handing him the milk.

He sat down, resting his head against the wall as he waited for the blood to dry up. That way it wouldn't bleed, that way it wouldn't burn him again.

For now he was fine with dealing with the wither effect.

He understood how she felt, wanting to protect something, or rather someone, that mattered to her.

He understood because he was feeling the exact same thing, right at that exact same moment.

A sudden scream broke him out of his thoughts, and everyone around them faced in the direction of a frantic player who had just ran back.

Not back from the portal, not from the overworld.

This player was a part of the spawner search.

His animal-like ears perking out of his orange hair were stained with blood, as his expression held one of complete and utter horror. In shock, George squinted his eyes reading the player's username.

ItsFundy.

And he was a mess, flooded in stress and panic.

"Fundy, are you okay?" Nihachu asked, running towards him with food in her hands. "We have to get you patched up and fast."

But he didn't follow her as she tried bringing him back towards the makeshift medical center, instead taking a deep breath as he relayed out the message.

All eyes were on him, all the players were awaiting his words.

Words that decided their fate, words which most assumed only contained the worst.

"Anyone who still has the capability to fight, we need your help. We just found another spawner!" He yelled.

It was an announcement meant to be laced with joy, supposed to be full of happiness.

But no one celebrated. No one let out even the smallest sign of relief.

Because his tone was too fearful, it was too tense.

And he was trembling, full of fear, full of worry.

George watched as the expressions of the players sank, listening to Fundy's final announcement.

"Problem is there are still hunters in the nether! The entire group is surrounded and we're fucked, 800 are dead!"

800 are dead.

The words 'capable to fight' were far too vague.

It seemed to be more like a voluntary service than anything else, and rather than it being a matter of if they could, it seemed to be more of if they wanted to.

Hundreds with minor cuts stayed back. Hundreds with huge wounds were still going anyways.

George believed he could still fight, Dream didn't.

But they were both coming.

Neither had the time nor the energy to argue about it anymore.

The group of players were following Fundy, barely patched up and very much still wounded.

George could assume he was only at around five hearts, but he knew the location, so he was leading them anyways.

They had no time to worry about that now.

They had no time.

They never had time.

And as they approached the location, George was beginning to hear the clanking of metal as swords were hitting one another. The yells from players as they attempted to communicate through the battle.

They were entering a battlefield, death was a risk.

Risk was inevitable.

George steadied his breath as they ran in.

He didn't even know the goal. He supposed it was just don't get killed.

And kill them back.

Killing a player. Could George even kill someone?

"Watch out, someone behind you!" Dream yelled.

The attack from the incoming hunter was blocked by his friend, who shot him an urgent look to attack back.

And he did, running towards him and striking his arm.

The attack wasn't lethal, subconsciously George didn't mean for it to be, but it would've caused pain. It should've caused pain.

But the hunter looked so unfazed, as if it did nothing, and continued to run towards them anyways.

George blocked the next attack, and while the hunter was occupied Dream tried to go for the offensive. He was stopped though, by an arrow that had barely missed his neck, causing him to have to step back.

This was a battlefield, enemies were in all directions.

"George, I'm going to deal with that bow guy, stay on the defensive until I'm back." Dream said, running towards the direction of the arrow.

George gave him a small nod, as the fight prolonged.

The entire time the hunter would throw reckless attacks, only for George to either counter or dodge.

And when George would try to hit him back, they wouldn't even bother avoiding it, as if the pain was just normal. As if they were just used to it.

Throughout the fight, George avoided using his right arm. It was the one with the injury, the one that could easily be used against him.

He couldn't afford that in the slightest.

But he could barely concentrate either, because all around him were separate lives at risk. He wasn't the only one, and he hated watching those death messages pop up.

He hated knowing that while he was here, doing all he could to survive, there were people dying.

And that he shouldn't even be alive in the first place.

But he couldn't think about that now. He had to put aside his thoughts, his could of emotions flooding within him.

After a well timed block, the hunter's arm and weapon were pushed towards the ground and George noticed an opening for an attack.

An opening right at the hunter's neck. It could kill them.

But was killing them what he even wanted? Was he willing to kill a player?

To kill a person.

Then he remembered what Sapnap had said, that players who could respawn were often more reckless, often more risky.

This hunter he was fighting was ignoring all his injuries, this hunter was so used to the pain, this hunter was careless.

So that meant they could respawn.

That meant their life didn't matter.

George took a deep breath as he steadied his grip on the weapon, fixing his aim as he ran towards them.

He just needed one deep cut in the neck, he'd make it quick. But the guilt was choking him.

He had to remind himself that they could respawn, that killing them wouldn't really do anything. It was just a simple set back, to bring them back to their spawn point and take away all the items. That was all.

But he really had no way making sure of that besides his simple hunch.

It was so ironic.

He was killing someone, but he didn't want that person dead. He was hoping for his own enemy to live.

But maybe that's just the kind of person George was.

And he didn't quite know if that was a good thing or a bad one.

He landed his strike perfectly, causing the hunter's neck to be slashed and a gash of blood to come out. But the blood quickly disappeared as the hunter did as well, slowly fading away as his stuff scattered on the floor.

And George was feeling the guilt wash through him, realizing what he had just done.

He had killed a person, that's what.

He quickly surveyed through the items, as the common procedure said he should, picking up the armor and weapons that way the hunters couldn't reuse it.

But his hands were shaking from the pure and utter guilt he felt.

Respawn, he wanted his enemy to respawn.

He was such a fucking idiot.

And his face lit up in shock as he saw a familiar name tag appear in the corner of his vision. It was far away, he could barely read it, but it was the same.

It was the name of his hunter.

They were alive, they had respawned.

A wave of relief hit George, his guilt slowly fading away, but before he could take a better look at the name tag, it suddenly disappeared, presumably from crouching causing it to become hidden.

He was about to ignore it, and move on to help Dream until he noticed something strange about that occurrence.

It was simply that the hunter had respawned in the nether, not the overworld.

That wasn't supposed to happen. The hunters were supposed to be trapped in an endless loop of battle in the overworld. Supposed to be.

Respawn anchors.

That's how there were still hunters in the fortress, that's how they were able to kill so many of them. It was the same thing as last time, only more concealed and more hidden.

They had just assumed the hunters were only using beds; respawn anchors were too expensive, and they already had a safe opening from the overworld to the nether.

But George had just seen the name tag of a hunter reappear out of nowhere, one that he had just killed, one that had just died.

And that explained how there were still hunters here, how despite outnumbering them, they were still losing the fight.

He ran over to Dream, who upon landing another hit on his opponent, stood there as he watched the player run away.

That was a player who was on hardcore, that was a player whose life mattered to them more than anything.

And Dream just let them run, not bothering to finish them off, not bothering to kill them.

George pulled on Dream's hoodie to catch his attention, to which he looked back at George with a relieved expression.

He had gotten out of his fight with barely any injuries.

Maybe George wasn't that bad either.

"Where's the person you were fighting?" Dream asked.

George shook his head, pulling Dream by the hand as he ran towards the direction of the name tags. "I killed them Dream, but I saw their name tag reappear!"

The masked man was about to shrug it off as another respawn before the statement fully processed.

"They respawned."

Dream's face was dawned in worry until a thought popped back up in his mind. "Wait, so do you know where the respawn anchors are!?"

George nodded, dragging him along the corridors to where he saw the name tag.

It was probably in the inside of a wall, they'd likely just have to guess the location.

That's what they thought until they heard the familiar sound of glowstone charges being placed into them.

Dream immediately pulled George down, hiding their name tags as they both put their ears towards the wall.

They could hear the players inside, ones that had just respawned. They were recharging the anchors, and getting new equipment from chests.

It was perfect for them to attack.

It would be so easy. Just wait for them to leave, just break the respawn anchors.

Then it would be over. Or at least it should be.

"George, I have to go in and break those things." Dream whispered.

He looked back at his friend as if he were crazy. "Are we not going to call for backup in chat?"

"We can't. They know our code, it's way too risky."

George frowned, but agreed with his friend anyways. He was right, it's for the same reason they sent Fundy back earlier to relay the message, rather than just sending it in chat.

Communication was scarce, and it was difficult. They had the element of surprise; they weren't willing to waste it.

"How many respawn anchors do you think we need to break in there anyways?" George asked, keeping his voice low.

"Not many, they cost a lot to make, and they can be shared by more than one player anyways."

George nodded, pulling out his sword and prepping to go inside. He took deep breaths, glancing once again at his wound, before shaking his head.

He'd have to ignore it, the fear and the pain. He was fine with doing that, that's what he signed up for, he chose this.

This was his choice.

But all Dream noticed was the slight trembling in his skin and his quickened breaths. He sighed, clasping onto his hand in an attempt to comfort him.

Because he was still scared, as much as he would cover it up.

And so was Dream, terrified for leaving his best friend's life on the line.

God he hated this. He hated putting George's life at risk. He hated this game, he hated the very fact that his friend was here.

It may have been George's choice, but it wasn't his own. He would've done anything to avoid this, anything to stop him from his reckless choices, his stupid decisions.

"George, you don't have to go, I can do it alone." He said. He was so desperate, as well hidden as that part of him might have been. He was desperate to keep him safe, to keep George safe.

But he wasn't having any of that, and they both knew it.

George was stubborn.

George was an idiot.

Well, they were both idiots.

"Dream, I'm coming with you." George said firmly. There was no indecisiveness in his voice; this decision was final, and they both knew it.

In an argument, Dream would lose anyways. They both knew they needed George, they needed as many people as they could get.

He forced out a hollow laugh. "Well, I guess I should've known that."

"You should've. You're really stupid." George shot back.

"Oh, but you love me anyways." Dream said, leaning towards him with a playful smirk.

George frowned, pushing him away. "I never said I couldn't love you if you were stupid."

Dream chuckled, smiling to himself. "So that means you do right?"

"Do what?"

"Love me."

They sat in silence, both holding in their laughs as George rolled his eyes, dramatically crossing his arms.

George leaned back smugly. "Well, I'm never saying it."

"Oh come on, that doesn't mean you don't mean it." Dream countered back. His expression was so smug, so playfully happy, and that feeling was contagious, seeping out to George too. "So just tell me you love me."

"And how do you know I mean it?" George frowned.

For whatever reason, he was genuinely interested in this question. It's one that had been eating away at him, one he's seemingly been asking himself this whole time.

What does it mean to love someone?

But before he could get his answer, the hunters from within the wall broke open a hole, and ran towards the battle field.

They were in a rush, and didn't see the pair as they hid by the wall. Everyone inside had run out.

The small room, which was literally just a covered up hole they made in the wall, was now completely empty besides one player, who they both assumed was guarding the respawn anchors.

This was it, this was their opening.

"Quick, we need to go in, before anyone new respawns." Dream said. "I'll distract him, you break the anchors."

Dream didn't bother waiting for a response as he ran in, immediately locking swords with the guard.

And George followed soon after, easily spotting the four respawn anchors in the middle of the room, and taking out his pickaxe.

But as he began hacking at the blocks, nothing happened. Almost a minute had passed and it still wasn't broken, but that's when he realized one fatal flaw.

His pickaxe was iron, he couldn't even break it.

His heart sank, as he looked to Dream for help, occupied in a fight with the hunter.

"Dream, I need a better pickaxe!" George yelled out, causing him to step back in shock.

"The fuck- you don't have one?" George shook his head. "Well, check their chest or something quickly!"

And he was about to go do that until he noticed the hunter's face curve into a wicked smirk.

Okay nevermind, there was definitely not going to be anything in that chest. It could've been empty, or worse, trapped.

And he was about to go into a fit of panic, until he remembered those diamonds Sapnap had given him.

Three diamonds, just enough for a pickaxe.

Just enough, just barely enough.

A relieved smile found its way to his face, as he silently thanked his friend.

He quickly used the crafting table already in the room, pulling out some sticks and forming the crafting recipe on the grid.

It was just like minecraft, the materials joined together to form the pick.

George quickly grabbed it, running back to the respawn anchors to break them.

It was simple, the task was easy, yet George's heart was racing with adrenaline as he tried to do it as fast as he could, putting as much force in his hits on the block as possible.

Soon the first one was broken.

Then the second.

Then the third.

This was it, these hunters were done for.

A message appeared in chat, one that was broadcasted for all to see.

It was from TommyInnit, and the words read on it were loud and clear despite not even being heard.

The beds were broken.

And as George destroyed the final respawn anchor, a sudden sense of relief flooded through him, one that he seemingly shared with everyone.

Because now the only thing stopping them from getting those blaze rods and getting out of here was thousands of people.

Ones that couldn't respawn nearby, ones that no longer held such a big advantage over them.

All they had left to do was kill thousands of people.

How hard could that be?

Chapter End Notes

Lol I literally went on mc with my sister to test out the respawn anchors how they worked with multiple players.

Please don't expect every chapter to be this long it's pretty difficult to write, and as I say this, next chapter is even longer...

Edited/beta read by elle again who is really really nice, and edited by a sandboy without ao3

Also feel free to message me in the comments for fanart or anything, I'm really nice on ao3 dont worry

And side question, how old do u guys think I am? I asked this on wattpad, I just wanna know but I wont be saying the real answer lol.

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

Never got to thank you all for 1k kudos, but now its at 1.1k and its gonna hit 1.2k kudos soon, so I guess I can't really.

This is insane, thats a lot of ppl, thanks :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It *seemed* like a victory.

The hunter's numbers were decreasing, things were starting to look up.

And George wasn't dead yet, so that was a plus.

The group within the nether was almost completely finished off, players were just starting to clean up and head back towards the spawner.

Finally, it was over.

The bloodbath was done.

The hunters had stopped respawning, their numbers had stopped replenishing.

Most of them didn't even know the respawn anchors were broken and were being as risky as ever only to be put back at spawn point instead.

There was no way for them to run back on time, they were finally safe.

So why did no one feel that way?

Why was George still on edge? Why was his heart still racing like there was no tomorrow? Why was that familiar sense of fear still trailing behind him?

Maybe it was those daunting black hearts in his hotbar, or maybe it was the fact that they were yet to count the deaths.

All he knew was that it wasn't over.

The battle wasn't won until enough blazes were dead and the rods were secured. They weren't anywhere close to safe until every last hunter was dead.

But their situation had changed drastically, and definitely in a good way.

"How many are left?" Dream asked the man in front of him, it was Illumina, and he was searching through the now empty room and taking stuff from the hunter's old chest.

He was in all black, his face entirely covered besides his eyes, and it was almost impossible to tell what he was thinking. "I'd say maybe 100 left astray here in the nether." He replied. "They all split up though, I sent half to go after them and kill them off, and the other half are starting to safety

proof the spawner."

Half wasn't a lot, it sounded way more than it actually was. Thousands were injured and unable to fight, and thousands more were occupied in the overworld.

Still they outnumbered the hunters by a landslide.

George just sat there, listening in to their conversation. They were both the heads of their respective bases, and it was supposed to be somewhat of a quick status meeting, but he was dragged here anyways, Dream refusing to leave him alone.

"And how's the med center?" Dream asked.

"Safe." The other replied. "Well guarded, and the new injuries from the earlier battle have already been sent there."

Dream ran a hand through his hair, lightly rubbing the back of his neck. "So it's looking fine right?"

"Mostly, but we're trying not to be complacent." Butted in another voice. He was wearing a neon green block-like head imprinted with strange smiley faces on it. In real life he would've looked absolutely ridiculous, but it certainly wasn't the strangest skin George had seen.

"The overworld group is still fighting though." The man, whose name tag read 'Fruitberries', continued. "They aren't done yet, but it's looking like they'll beat them soon. After all, the beds are already broken."

George hummed a small smile, feeling relieved once again. From what he heard that's where Sapnap and Bad had gone, and it seemed they would be safe. Finally they would be safe.

But no one felt that way.

"We're going to transport the injured back to the overworld once all the hunters there have been killed." Illumina added. "It should be safer there than over here."

Safer, that's what mattered.

Dream tilted his head at the information, speaking the only words that came to mind. "So is George part of that group?"

He shot his friend a look, one that was just completely ignored.

"Wither effect? Yeah definitely." Fruit answered. "He shouldn't fight any blazes until that's healed."

George stumbled back in shock. "What? I'm fine, I can fight!" George argued. "It's not bleeding too much anymore, I haven't been withered since it was patched up."

"But that just means the blood is accumulating and it will soon." Dream countered causing George to step back. "You've risked enough, there's no longer any urgency, just stay back."

George was almost taken aback by those words. They were things Dream had wanted to say for a while, things he had already mentioned. The last time he was just overruled, the last time there was too much on the line.

But now they had time again. Now they weren't so pressured.

They were no longer in need of so many players. They were no longer in need of George's help.

And if it wasn't needed, Dream wasn't willing to take another risk.

After all, this whole game was a risk enough.

George just pouted playfully, hoping it would be shrugged off as a joke, though he knew it wasn't; the tone of his voice said it all. "No, I'm helping you guys out." He insisted. "I'm at full health, I'll be fine."

They had this argument already. They'd talked about this already.

So why was it that this time George was losing? Why was it that this time his voice could barely be heard in the conversation?

"And if you get burned and your wound opens again what are you going to do?"

George choked on his words, looking away from his friend. He had a point, and he hated that, but he really didn't want to think about it. "I'll just patch it up if it happens, it'll be fine."

Dream rolled his eyes. "Yeah, and you'll be in pain, how the fuck do you expect to do that?"

George didn't reply as Dream inched closer, clasping his hand in his own. But he couldn't make eye-contact with him, not with that mask he always wore.

"When you got the wither effect earlier, you almost died George. I don't want it to happen again."

He pulled away, gritting his teeth. "Dream, I didn't join this game just to do nothing. I want to go, this was and is my choice." He fought back, the emotion so clear, so evident in his voice.

"Well then maybe you shouldn't have joined it in the first place!" He snapped back, causing George to step back even further.

The hurt was visible on his face, as he pushed down his goggles down refusing to meet his friend's eyes.

He had given up everything to be here.

Dream had literally ran in without him, without saying a word, without saying goodbye.

George jumped in for Dream, to be here for him.

And that's the response he got for it.

So of course he was hurt, of course he was angry. There was so much he wanted to say to that, he just didn't know how to react, he could barely even process it.

Dream's facial expression softened for a bit as he placed a hand on his friend's shoulder.

"George, you almost died back then, I'm not letting you do it again, not when we're not in need of extra players, not when there's an option not to."

He let out a fake laugh, one so hollow and empty.

Those were the things Dream had wanted to tell him, those were the things that were on his mind every single day. His complete and utter lack of faith in him.

"Fine, whatever." He said, placing his hands in his pockets. But his voice was so monotone, trying so hard to hide the venom in his words.

Because to Dream, it was trying to keep him safe.

And to George, it was Dream simply not trusting him.

Dream didn't trust him.

It was tense.

The atmosphere between them was so fucking tense.

George didn't want to argue with Dream about it now, they were still in the fortress, they were still in danger.

He tried to pretend it was fine, pretend that it didn't affect him whatsoever.

But they both knew he wasn't.

It wasn't like he was mad or anything. He couldn't bring himself to be, he understood how Dream felt, as strange as that was, he knew that feeling.

The feeling of wanting to protect someone you cared about.

Still, he could barely hold a conversation without ending it abruptly or answering him rudely. He just didn't want to talk to him right now, there was too much on his mind.

And then he couldn't bear to look at Dream's face, Dream's mask.

It was just a reminder of how much he didn't trust him, how much he didn't know about him.

A reminder that they were so far apart, so far from understanding one another.

Dream didn't understand his reason for being here, he didn't understand why George had risked his life just to be put in this death game.

But in all honesty, George didn't exactly understand that either.

He thought he did.

And all of a sudden, he didn't.

They were walking together to bring George back to the medical area, where he could just wait for the fight to be over and be taken back to the overworld with everyone else.

He would be safe there, that's all that mattered.

And Dream wouldn't let George go alone, obviously, so he was taking him there.

But the atmosphere was suffocating him, and he shifted closer to his friend to try and make conversation.

Or at least attempt at one.

"George, you okay?" Dream asked, his voice full of concern.

But George was barely listening, barely even aware of his surroundings. He was too deep into his thoughts, too confused with himself. "Hmm?" He hummed out, tilting back his head. "Yeah, yeah, I'm fine."

It was a lie.

It was such a plainly obvious lie.

But he wasn't just lying to Dream. No, he himself thought he was fine.

He *wanted* to be fine.

Though that just meant he was lying to himself. Again.

"Sorry about what I said earlier." He said, knowing full well how it had affected George. Not in a good way, he was certain of that. "It just slipped, I swear I don't mean it."

But George just nodded, not bothering to even look at him.

He was always pretending, *they* were always pretending.

And then the conversation ended, both of them reverting back to their own thoughts.

The cloud of emotions that was their own thoughts.

That's when George heard footsteps, quiet small footsteps from above them. A situation that felt so familiar, so dangerous.

And his eyes lit open as he saw the roof above them break, and he grabbed his friend's hand, pulling him back, away from the sword, then slammed down on the ground, accompanied by a man in diamond armor.

With a name tag that was so familiar to him, too familiar to him.

A memory that brought back the trauma that was the pain of an injury on his right arm.

He didn't want to deal with this, not now, not with this flurry of emotions he was carrying.

But the hunter in front of him was dead serious, that cocky smirk erased from his face entirely. His relaxed, careless demeanor was nowhere to be seen, he couldn't respawn here anymore, this was his last shot.

At killing Dream.

Or at the very least getting George instead.

"Who the fuck uses the same trick twice expecting it to work?" George commented, causing the man's eye to twitch in frustration.

They stood across one another, the severity of the atmosphere intensifying. Dream immediately took out his sword, standing in front of George.

All of a sudden he looked so confident, so prepared and ready as if he was expecting it.

He really wasn't, but sometimes pretending could be a good thing.

"Look who it is again." Dream taunted. "You do know I was on full health earlier, right, Xeno?"

George had expected the hunter to just laugh it off. Fill the room with that same voice of insanity like he usually would. But he only stood there, adjusting his stance as he eyed Dream.

Earlier he was playing around, holding George's life in his hands like a toy. He had control of the situation, he had nothing to lose.

That was no longer the case.

"Heh, you and I both know I was distracted, I would've won that fight." He said, sounding so smug yet so cautious.

Dream stepped forward again, acting as a barrier between George and the hunter. "*Could've*," He corrected. "But I doubt you would have. Also where's that big-ass sword of your's. Did you lose it?"

He said that knowing full well he knew he had it in his inventory, he said that knowing full well it would piss him off.

That was the point, and it was working.

The hunter lunged forward at Dream who blocked the attack flawlessly.

Normally that wouldn't have worked, Xeno's attacks were usually too strong, too forceful to be blocked.

But he was missing that stupid sword of his, and it was far too expensive to be carrying around a spare.

After the attack was blocked George saw an opening and ran in, pulling out his weapon and reaching for the hunters stomach.

But that didn't work, with him instead being pushed back.

Not by Xeno, but by Dream.

George stumbled back in shock, his eyes widening as he went to face his friend who wasn't even looking back at him.

He wasn't going to let George fight blazes, and there was no way he'd let him fight this lunatic.

No, he wasn't going to let George put his life on the line again.

But he couldn't say it out loud, he couldn't let Xeno know, so instead he shot George an urgent look, knowing full well he knew what it meant.

He wanted George to run, again.

It seemed like a repeat, a cycle of events. It seemed so familiar, him making the decision to run away, to leave his friend alone.

He refused to do that a second time.

But the fight still went on like that, with George just barely watching from the sidelines. There was no way for him to enter the battle, Dream was making it impossible for him to even so much as get close to the hunter, purposefully timing his steps and blocks to keep him away.

It was safer that way.

George was safer that way.

But as the fight stretched on Dream could tell he needed the help. Xeno was taking this far too seriously, not even so much as exchanging the confident words he usually did.

He was playing to kill him, that was his only goal now, his sole purpose.

Dream was on seven hearts, and he had no clue how low the man in front of him was.

Dream took a step back as his opponent's blade slashed down beside him hurting his arm. Dream had missed his previous attack, barely, but he did.

And now he was on five hearts.

He winced, doing his best to ignore the pain, as George ran in again, taking advantage of Dream's inability to block him off in his current state.

He couldn't watch that.

He couldn't watch Dream risk his life right in front of him.

Dream was such a fucking hypocrite.

Before Xeno could get in another attack, George reached out with this sword lightly grazing his torso.

It wasn't meant to do a lot of damage, but it did just enough to push him back, giving them both breathing space.

"Dream, why the fuck did you give me that gapple earlier?!" George scolded. "Look, now you're low and there's no way for you to regenerate quickly."

His friend stared back at him in shock, before a worried look donned his face. George ignored him though as steadied his breaths, waiting for another attack.

"No, you answer me George. Get the fuck out of here, okay, I don't want you getting hurt!"

"And here you are doing that exact same thing!" George shot back.

Dream looked away, watching in shock as George ran in again. This should've been an easily won battle, it was two players against one.

But their teamwork was absolute shit.

They were still on edge with one another.

George's emotions were still conflicting, confusing the fuck out of him.

And Dream wasn't even letting his friend get anywhere near danger, doing everything in his power to stop him from getting hit.

They weren't going to win like this.

George narrowly dodged another attack from Xeno, making Dream's heart drop at the thought of him getting hit.

It was an opening, Dream could've attacked him, but he didn't, instead choosing to block Xeno's second attack. One George would've been able to dodge.

Here he was again, not putting any sort of trust in him.

But then Dream got in a sudden hit, his sword piercing straight into the opening of the hunter's armor.

It was a mess up by Xeno, it would've put him at such a low health.

Dream moved in closer to push in his sword further to finish him off.

This was it, he'd kill him, it'd be over.

But as George stepped back to give Dream the space to kill him, he noticed from the side of his vision the hunter pull out a bottle, one made of thin glass and a red blood-like colored liquid inside.

It was a potion.

That was a bait.

It was a splash potion of harming, they were both low. If he threw it now, it would hit both of them, it was a suicide attack, it would kill both of them.

But Xeno could respawn.

Dream could not.

"Dream, watch out!" George yelled, causing Dream to look back at him in shock, but it was too late.

Xeno suddenly threw it into the air, knowing full well what it would do.

And his aim was perfect, it was going to land right on top of them, it was going to kill them.

This was his plan, it was so simple, yet so possible.

There wasn't going to be enough time for him to react, for Dream to at least.

But George ran in, pulling out his sword as he did the only thing he could think of, the only thing he could.

He jumped up, lining his sword perfectly, taking advantage of his agility, running as fast as he could, and placing a block below him as he jumped up into the air.

This was risky, but it was the only thing he could do.

He suddenly slashed down his sword, breaking the bottle midair, causing the contents of it to scatter out.

The liquid would hit all of them, it would hurt, but the potion wasn't landing directly, they would

live.

Dream would live.

And that's all that mattered.

Many small droplets landed on all three of them, and they had their hearts drop exponentially.

It was painful, the liquid opening up small wound-like cuts on their skin, but the concentration of the potion was still small enough not to do major damage.

Xeno gritted his teeth at the failure of his last ditch effort, pulling out his sword and running at Dream while he was still in shock, while he was still processing the situation.

He'd kill him no matter what.

He pushed his sword into Dream's torso, causing him to stumble back and grip onto his opponent's sword to try and push it away and pull it out.

But the moment George landed back on his feet, he rammed into him, pushing him away before he could deepen the cut.

And in the shock of the situation Xeno had dropped his sword, leaving it on the ground and George pulled out his own, pressing it against his enemy's neck.

He had Xeno's back against the netherbrick wall, with Dream safe and sound on the ground below, at a low health, almost dead, but still very much alive.

George was alive. Dream was alive. The hunter was cornered.

George steadied his breathing, hiding the trembling in his hands.

Now all he had to do was kill Xeno.

He had no stupid wither effect stopping him now, nothing holding him back. The situation was in his favor.

It was so easy, it was so simple.

So why couldn't he do it?

Why were his hands shaking as he did his best to keep a steady grip on his sword?

Why was that familiar sense of fear within him rising once again?

Why couldn't he kill him?

Well he knew the reason. It was that this man here held all the answers, the answers to the things Dream wouldn't tell him, to the things Dream hid away.

Dream didn't trust him.

"George, kill him already!" Dream yelled, his hands pressed against his stomach. He had to end it quickly, he had to finish it off. Dream couldn't help him, he was injured, lying down on the floor, desperately hoping for his wounds to heal.

But he couldn't, with Dream's words barely echoing past him.

"You shouldn't have won that fight." Xeno commented, the anger in his voice so evident and clear.

And as much as George hated to admit it, he was right, they had so much more in their favor.

They outnumbered the hunter easily distracting him, he didn't even have his weapon of choice. The hunter had underestimated George, only knowing of his skill level in a fight where he had been wounded, stuck with the painful wither effect. And George had gotten lucky, so very lucky in the end that his hit on the potion landed.

And yet they had still almost lost.

Dream had still almost died.

That was the fear crawling in the back on George's mind, it was the same fear present within him, the same exact thing.

It was a repeat, a cycle.

A cycle of fear, of death.

That was the game they were trapped in, that is what they had to end.

But as George strengthened his grip on the sword he still found his mind faltering, with Dream's voice echoing in the background, screaming for him to end it, to kill him.

But he couldn't, not with those questions still in his mind.

He tightened his hold, inching his blade closer as the words finally left his mouth.

"Why do you want to kill Dream?" He asked, trying to sound as brave as possible, trying to contain his fear, trying to hide it.

Dream's eyes opened in shock at the question, as he felt himself dreading the hunter's response.

But George needed to know his answer, his curiosity was killing him, eating away at his soul.

Dream wouldn't tell him, he never would.

He always kept his secrets away from him, holding in everything, not even bothering to say why.

This was the only way he could get his answers.

And suddenly the hunter laughed again, it was that same laugh of insanity from earlier, the same thing that caused chills to crawl down George's spine.

And suddenly they made eye-contact, through Xeno's gas mask, through George's goggles.

And for a split second, George saw a familiar emotion shine back at him, one he was so used to. Pain. Anguish.

"I'm just getting revenge." He answered back, his eyes darting back to Dream as he shot him a venomous look.

But George pressed him back, moving the blade even closer. "Revenge for what exactly?" He

asked, the caution present in his words.

But the hunter just laughed again. "You think Dream's so innocent don't you? You think all he does is save people, all he does is protect you."

And George didn't give a response, his eyes looking back at Dream for his response.

He didn't get any.

Instead he got that same expression he saw weeks ago, a face of hidden guilt, one almost impossible to see behind that mask of his.

Followed by Xeno's laughter, his terrifying, inhumane laughter.

"Dream killed my best friend!" He spat out. "And that's not the only one he's killed. But he's innocent, just because he's on the right side."

"I-"

"You all accuse us, but sometimes there are people who become one of us because they don't want to die, they're afraid of it! My friend didn't want to die, but look where that got her."

George stood there in shock, Dream looked away, not bothering to say anything.

And he suddenly understood, he understood why he seemed so ashamed to tell him.

It was trust, again.

Dream didn't trust him.

Dream didn't trust him to understand, he never did.

But he didn't have the time to process it, he still had to kill him.

Though he still had one more question on his mind, one that to him made no sense at all.

"So then why do you want to kill me?"

"Shouldn't it be obvious?" The hunter chuckled, his head against the wall. "It's because it's the second best thing, leaving Dream alone like me, the person he cared about the most, *dead*." His words were laced with venom, his tone was aggressive, it was furious, yet pained.

But even that still didn't make sense to him.

Sapnap was there, but he didn't even try to kill him.

He was Dream's friend too, Dream would risk everything to protect him as well.

But George was the target.

"That's not what I mean, why me?" George asked. "Why not Bad, why not Sapnap?"

And then the hunter laughed. Again, mocking him as if the answer was so obvious.

"You mean you haven't heard the rumors-the rumors about you?"

George shook his head in shock, looking back again at Dream.

But he was completely still, completely silent, unable to look at George. He had no response, nothing to say.

"N-no, what rumors?"

The hunter smirked, a smug expression on his face. "Oh, so he hasn't even told you that?"

George gritted his teeth, shoving the sword even closer to his throat. "What rumors?" He repeated, emphasizing his words.

He needed his answers.

And he was going to get his answers.

The hunter chuckled a bit, before looking him in the eye once more, sending shivers down George's spine as he fought the urge to back away.

"You're the one he gave up everything for. You're one of the main reasons he's even here. You're the one he sacrificed everything to protect." He spat out, moving closer as George felt himself step back.

Dream wanted to keep him safe, he knew that already, but this was new.

George stuttered, struggling to make the words come out. "What do you mean by that?"

The hunter smirked, leaning in closer as if to rub it in his face that George didn't know. That not even this- George didn't even know this.

He knew nothing.

"Dream made a deal with Mojang," he finally said, pride dripping from his voice. "To keep you out of the game, to try and keep you *safe*."

George choked on air, the realization finally hitting him.

Dream didn't trust him.

"That in exchange for him joining, for him lending his efforts and logging on, they would make sure you never would."

He glanced back at his friend as he searched his eyes for answers, for a response, anything.

But his face remained blank, empty. Hidden behind a mask, a mask that was just a sign, just a reminder.

That Dream never trusted him.

Chapter End Notes

You probably saw this coming lol, most people had it figured out. I'm gonna pretend it was supposed to be super obvious, just so that I look smarter :)

Word count is 4.5k which is the longest chapter so far, pog?

Btw, this is the last nether chapter. I hate the nether even more now after writing all of this, fuck the nether.

Also, I am not that old... I'm really not that old

Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George had no idea how to feel.

They had won.

He had killed Xeno- the man who'd caused so many problems for him- with his own hands. He felt guilty for doing so, but he always did.

And the hunters were all dead. The ones in the overworld had been killed, and the ones in the nether were all finished off and taken care of. All of the injured were safely transferred back to the overworld, and the rest were in the nether, still fighting the blazes, but with the weight of the hunters' presence finally lifted off their shoulders.

This was it, it's what they've been working for, what they had risked everything for.

They were so much closer now, so much closer to beating the game. They had basically secured the blaze rods and the spawners; there were no hunters in sight.

They had won.

They had won, with 4,000 deaths and a broken friendship.

They had won, but it wasn't a victory. It never was.

George sighed, resting his head against the tree behind him.

He couldn't comprehend his own emotions, feeling as if his mind was sinking deeper and deeper, it was almost like an endless ocean, an ocean that was nothing but his thoughts. His never ending, ever changing thoughts.

Everything was piling up on him, all his sudden realizations and questions, finally answered.

And it wasn't even Dream to tell him.

He took deep breaths, taking in the time alone he finally had.

He couldn't face his friends, he just couldn't.

From the moment they had gotten back to the overworld, George hadn't spoken to Dream, Dream hadn't spoken to him. He just ran off into the dark oak forest to recollect his thoughts.

There were no attempts between the two were ever made to start a conversation.

And he couldn't have gone to Sapnap and Bad for advice either. They were both back inside the nether, they were both still risking their lives.

Besides, he didn't want to talk to Sapnap, because he knew. Just like Dream, he knew why he was kept out of the game.

He knew and he didn't tell him. They all knew and they all never told him.

It was too much, too much rushing down on him.

Their trust was broken, and both of them knew it.

He wanted to be angry at Dream, he already was. He couldn't quite tell if this anger was right, if it was justified, but that didn't matter to him. He didn't want to think about it anymore.

If anything, he was more hurt.

Hurt because he was shoved away from the game, kept away from doing anything at all. Secrets were hidden from him, from the friends he trusted, from the friends he thought trusted him.

Hurt because they never told him anything, hurt because he knew nothing.

People doubted him, his own best friend doubted him, at this point, he even doubted himself.

His breaths were shaky, as he leaned onto the tree behind him. He was so tempted to cry, to let all his emotions drip out.

God, he had so many emotions to let out, so many things he was bottling in.

He was always bottling it in wasn't he? He was always pretending. *They* were always pretending.

Pretending that they were fine, pretending it was nothing. Shoving away the conflict to deal with it later, holding it in because they didn't want to face the risks.

The risks of losing a friendship, of breaking what little they still had. It was more fragile than he told himself it was, and he didn't want to be the one to crack it.

So he blinded himself to every little conflict, every small issue. He never made a big deal about them, he never spoke his true feelings about them. He didn't question Dream, he didn't pry his best friend for answers.

He told himself it would be fine, that it was already fine.

Only it wasn't fine, it was never fine.

And that simple lie caused his emotions to accumulate even further, shoving him into this mess of thoughts he was now sinking into.

He walked over to the lake in front of him, sitting by the water's edge. The shimmering deep blue water that almost reminded George of himself. Clear as day, and yet the deeper it got, the harder it was to see.

And yet somehow it was still calming, and he placed his hand in the water, ruffling the smooth waves, relishing that cool feeling.

He felt so used to the nether at this point, the dryness and heat of it, that this felt so unnatural.

He looked over the water, staring back at his reflection. He looked horrific, there were eye bags under his eyes, small cuts and burns all over his face that were yet to heal.

He really shouldn't have survived that.

He didn't want to think about it, how he didn't deserve to live through it.

There had been so many instances where George had almost died, so many instances where he messed up and had just relied on being saved.

There were so many lives that had been lost, so many people who had died in front of him.

Dream was right.

He really shouldn't trust him.

He couldn't defend himself, The wither effect, his wither effect, put them in so much danger. He messed up, and that almost got them both killed.

George held his breath, watching his reflection blur as droplets of water fell onto the lake.

The rain suddenly poured around him, accompanied by his tears, the ones he'd been trying so hard to keep in.

But he needed to break down, he needed to let it all out. He'd been holding it in for so long.

And yet there was no one he could turn to. His friends were in the nether, and he just couldn't face Dream. He didn't want to.

His tears slowly fell into the water, the droplets concealed within the rain. He felt so fucking useless, so hurt, and pained, and tired.

To join this game was his choice, and he didn't even know if it was the right one anymore.

He had given up everything to be here. His safety, his family, possibly his own life.

He had sacrificed all of that because he had to free the game ,to rescue the players trapped in here.

That was just his excuse, because in reality he logged on for his friend, to check that he was safe, to make sure that he wasn't actually dead, that he actually did respawn. To reunite with him, because deep down he knew that he missed him, he knew that he missed Dream.

And because he didn't want him to die, he *couldn't* have him die.

The only issue with that was, he had no clue if it was worth it anymore.

Because Dream didn't trust him, which made everything seem so one sided, it made George feel so hurt, so lacking.

He sat there, still like the environment surrounding him. There was no sound, only the soft droplets of rain falling around him.

It was quiet, just like George was trying to be. His weeps were soft, almost like whimpers. As if he didn't want anyone to hear, to find him. He wanted to be alone.

He needed to be alone.

To organize his doubts, his emotions within him. To fix himself, or at least try to.

All of a sudden, the rain stopped, and the droplets stopped hitting him. His reflection cleared up, and he quickly noticed the red in his eyes, strained from the tears he was letting out. Strained from the tears he had long bottled in, finally being freed.

And as he looked back into the water; he noticed a familiar figure behind him, a familiar smile that haunted him wherever he went. In his dreams.

In his nightmares.

That smile, it was a reminder of their lack of trust, how his friend didn't trust him enough to even so much as show him his face. 4 years, and he didn't even know that much. 4 years, and there still was no trust.

A smile that was so emotionless, so empty. It was just blank, still and unmoving, like George wanted to be.

George wanted to be hidden away too. At least then it would be fair. He wanted to have his own secrets, he wanted to do the same that Dream did to him.

Leave him with nothing, no trust, no words. He wanted to distance himself away from him, he wanted to be what Dream now was to him.

And yet he knew that he could never bring himself to do it.

That smile, it was a barrier between the two, one so plainly obvious and in sight. No one else wanted to mention it, no one wanted to invade their friendship, their privacy, their trust.

But that friendship crumbled on its own.

It crumbled when Dream pushed him away, when their secrets were spilled out. It fell apart, just as their trust did too.

No, their trust never existed. That trust, it was only a dream, something George had hoped he would gain, something he pretended was there for his own sake.

Dream quietly stood above him, holding his hoodie above his friend, stopping the rain from reaching him.

To George, he was completely expressionless, empty. Standing completely still, only waiting for George to say something as the rain poured around them. That mask, it made him seem that way.

Under there, was pain, emotions that Dream was pretending didn't exist. Under there was an entirely different person.

One that George couldn't see. A person, that to George, never existed.

George only ignored him, turning away from the reflection of the water, not bearing to look at him. He hugged his legs, trying not to look at him, to get reminded again.

Because God knows, he didn't need another reminder.

A reminder that Dream didn't trust him. He didn't want to know that, he didn't want to think about it.

He wanted to ignore it, he wanted to pretend it wasn't true. He wanted to continue lying to himself, for his sake, for their sakes. To keep this friendship intact, to prevent any conflict.

He wanted to continue doing what he had been doing for the past few years.

And Dream just stood there, no words leaving his mouth. He was too scared, that he would say the

wrong thing, mess everything up again. He knew he messed up, he knew that he got himself into this situation.

Now it was just a matter of whether he could fix it.

It was silent, the only sound being the rain falling around them as George desperately tried to wipe away his tears, looking away the entirety of the time.

Though their atmosphere couldn't even be considered tense anymore; if anything, there wasn't even an atmosphere at all.

It was just empty.

Void of words, void of either of them expressing anything to one another. Just two idiots, bottling up their feelings, only waiting for it to explode.

Waiting, that wasn't ever a good thing, was it?

"W-we should go inside." Dream said, struggling to get the words out of his mouth. He wore no expression on his face, his mouth was completely concealed by his mask, but his voice was pouring with emotion.

He, himself, was pouring with emotion, but he was still hiding it.

They were always hiding. They were always pretending.

George didn't bother looking back at him. He couldn't respond, he needed his time alone, to collect his thoughts.

They remained silent.

They remained empty.

So empty, yet so drowned in emotions.

Dream swallowed the air beneath his throat, gently placing an arm on his friend's shoulder. "George, listen, we need to talk."

He was right, they did. They really did.

But George just shuffled away, refusing to so much as look at him. He couldn't, he didn't want to.

"I'm sorry George."

He knew that already, he was sorry too. Sorry for being such a burden, for even so much as being there in the game, with him.

This was his fault, wasn't it?

He looked away from him, sitting still for a while longer. It was silence, and neither of them could bear it, it just seemed too unnatural for them. Like they had just met, like they had never seen each other before.

Because they really haven't. In the four years that they had known each other, Dream never even bothered to show his face. That was normal, it kept parts of them separated that way.

Except this felt so different, so closed off. The barrier between the only growing, despite being right next to Dream, George felt so far away from him.

Like they had never even known each other in the first place.

George held his breath, before quickly standing up, briskly walking away back under the nearest tree.

He kept his eyes focused straight in front of him, as he sat back down, looking towards the ground. It honestly didn't matter where he was going, as long as it was away.

Anywhere but here. Anything but being near him.

He didn't want Dream to see him like this, not like this.

But his friend followed anyways, taking a seat next to him as he rested his head on the tree. His movements were so gentle, every step being so soft, like he was trying not to disrupt his friend, like he was trying not to be there.

He knew this might be making it worse, he knew this could send their friendship plummeting down even further. And yet he couldn't just sit still, he couldn't just watch it.

He *had* to fix this mess.

And yet even when he turned around to face George, a slight movement that could have easily gone unnoticed, he didn't look back.

It wasn't just because George couldn't see it. He noticed these things, these little things about Dream. He always noticed them.

It was simply because he couldn't look back. He couldn't bear it, he didn't want to.

He didn't want to be reminded that Dream didn't trust him, he didn't want to accept that.

He wanted to keep pretending.

He moved even further away, and there was still silence, the obvious divide between the two.

The silence was taunting almost, just waiting for someone to speak, to break the fragile atmosphere they were stuck in.

Dream sighed, gently touching his friend's hand. "Please, George, talk to me." His voice was so desperate, so pained. And George glanced back at him, to face his friend, to see his expression. Only to be met once again with that smile. It was so fake, yet so taunting.

George turned away again, ripping away his hand and bringing it back to his chest. "What do you want?" He finally said, trying so hard to sound fine, like he just didn't care, as if he wanted his friend to leave.

He wanted to sound angry, he wanted to sound like he didn't need him.

But his voice just came out in cracks, small broken cracks, his tone faltering, trying so hard not to break, to not just crumble in front of him.

Because God did he want someone to open up to, someone to hug and comfort him. That person was usually Dream, the person he would run to for all his woes and troubles.

He wanted to cry in front of him, he wanted to break down with him, so he'd console him like he usually would, so that he'd be with him through it all.

Like he always would.

And yet that always was starting to feel like a lie. The emotions were always so one-sided, Dream would never truly tell George anything, and yet George never failed to speak out everything.

George trusted Dream, and Dream didn't trust him back.

So it made sense that at the same time, he wanted to run away from him. He wanted to cut these ends, he wanted to feel the same way. Make it fair, make it normal. He wanted to get away from the reminder, and Dream was that reminder.

This was his sea of emotions, broken in pieces, so conflicted, so torn.

George suddenly stood up, not bothering to look back. To just get away, get away from all of this.

"I swear I didn't mean to kill them." Dream said, almost as if he was pleading, pleading for George to listen as he grabbed his hand. "I didn't know they couldn't respawn, I didn't know, if I did, I wouldn't have done it!"

But George only stood there in shock, gritting his teeth as he turned to face back at him. "Are you kidding me Dream, do you honestly think that's why I am upset?!" He snapped, looking back at his friend, tears threatening to fall.

He didn't bother trying to stop them, holding his breath as Dream struggled to come up with a response.

"You think I'd hate you for killing people?" George yelled back. "Do you really think I would hate you for something so stupid?"

What followed after was silence, Dream choking on his breath as George looked away again, letting go of his hand.

"I understand, Dream. You had to or you would've died. That's how it works." He shot back. "It's the reality, that's the kind of game we're in."

"What I don't understand is why you kept it from me; why you hid it?" He continued, trying his hardest to hide the hurt in his voice. It was practically spilling out, pouring out. "You didn't trust me enough, did you? You thought I'd be the type of person to leave you behind because of that?"

Dream only paused, looking away because he had no words, no response to that.

George was right.

While he was sinking in his own emotions, flooded by his overwhelming thoughts, *Dream was drowning in guilt.*

It wasn't considered wrong, it was even considered normal in this world. They were used to it. That's how they survived, that's how they'd beat the game.

Killing people wasn't a crime. That's why to Sapnap, Dream had done nothing wrong.

Killing people was just a part of the world they lived in, the unavoidable.

But there were people who didn't think that. There were people who would whisper about it, talk behind his back about it.

He was killed, and yet he had respawned. Somehow, he had respawned.

He killed someone, and that someone was gone forever.

That's what Dream was known as. To some people, they hated him out of jealousy, to others, they hated him out of anger. To some it was a mixture of both, jealous that he had the fortune to respawn, and blaming his accidents, his irreversible killings, as an excuse to hate him.

They called Dream a murderer.

Dream called himself a murderer.

And he was afraid George would become one of them. One of the people who would despise him for it.

It was stupid of him, but that's how thin their line of trust was. That thin line, now broken.

He was too afraid of losing him, of losing George. Of George hating him forever because of it, of his mistakes, of his own guilt.

Well that backfired, didn't it?

"I've known you for years, and you still think I'd just walk away, as if it meant nothing. As if *you* meant nothing to me." George said, aching in his own words.

The rain fell around them, enveloping the space between the two.

"You don't. You mean more than that." He spat out, before attempting to walk away again, only to be grabbed by Dream, this time on the shoulder, both hands twisting him to make him face his friend.

He tried moving, he tried walking away, and yet he couldn't. Not because his friend's grip was strong, Dream's hands were practically just falling on him. Gentle without question, tired, and scared.

Dream's hands felt scared, there was not an ounce of grip on them.

And yet George couldn't move, he just didn't have the strength to. He tried walking away, he wanted to, and yet he couldn't.

He didn't have the strength to leave Dream, he didn't have the strength to not trust him. He couldn't do that, because if it meant losing him, he would never be able to do it.

George tilted his head slightly upwards, for the first time looking back at Dream since they arrived back into the overworld. George didn't want to, he was even so much as avoiding being near him.

But Dream almost seemed different, like he wasn't even himself. His hair was all messed up, and his shirt was still dirty. He couldn't see his face, but George could tell that whatever was under there, wasn't so pleasant either.

The sight was almost pitiful, he seemed so stressed, so fearful.

They had won already, and yet Dream was still scared.

And as George's eyes made its way to Dream's torso, he winced, noticing the large bandaged up wound with blood still seeping out of it. A cut that he watched form right in front of him, a painful wound he couldn't stop.

He absolutely hated the sight of it, a wound he gained from protecting him, a wound he gained from fighting Xeno in order to save George.

George got out uninjured, he got out completely fine, completely safe. He was okay, and forced to stare back at Dream, who left himself half-dead.

But Dream didn't even seem bothered by it, not in the slightest. It was the least of his priorities, he was the least of priorities. He only stepped closer, gently lifting up his friend's arm as he examined the wound.

And his touch was so gentle, so soft that George didn't even bother pulling away. He couldn't, not with Dream like this.

Not with his hands shivering as he held up his arm, a small detail George didn't notice, something he barely even spotted. But it was there, Dream was scared.

"Just come back with me for a bit, we'll treat your wither effect." He said, lightly tugging George on the hand, to which he didn't move.

Dream's own cut wasn't even fully treated, George could tell. It was sloppily bandaged, done as quick as possible just so he could hurry away. Hurry back to George.

To risk his life again, to risk that wound bleeding out again, just so he could make sure George was okay.

He was doing it again, risking his life for his friend. And not letting his friend do the same.

George let out a hollow laugh, pulling his hand back with as much force as he could. "You're such a fucking hypocrite."

Dream stopped, looking back at his friend, his head low. "No, but George we should treat this, and fast."

George stepped back, not bothering to listen to him. He was fed up with this, with his friend's clouded and stubborn judgement.

Him thinking that it was fine, to let himself die, and let George watch him.

"You always do this Dream!" George yelled, watching as his friend stepped back in shock.

He had been bottling it all up, and now he was on the verge of breaking down.

These were the words he'd been trying to keep in for so long. He was finally going to say it.

"You protect me, and keep me away from danger, but you don't let me do the same." He choked on his breaths, watching as Dream's expression stayed the same, refusing to change from that simple smile. "You keep fucking almost dying, and you get mad at me for doing that same thing."

He grasped his friend's hand, pulling him back. "But you keep putting yourself in danger George."

"Yeah, and so do you." He shot back. "I had to watch you get stabbed earlier, you wouldn't even let me help!" His voice was shaky, even so much as the memory of causing him to break.

"Because you'd get hurt." Dream said, trying so hard to stop himself from raising his voice, from screaming his emotions out. "You already got hurt earlier, and I didn't want it to happen again."

"But look at you Dream!" George countered back. "You almost died too, do you not know how it would feel, *if I was the one who lost you.*"

Dream stepped back, watching as George's expression shifted into tears.

Pure, raw tears. Nothing held back, he didn't bother doing that anymore, he didn't bother pretending anymore

Not if that meant Dream could die again.

Not if it meant putting his life at risk.

The atmosphere shifted around them as George's expression wavered and faltered between his breaths.

His storm of emotions, he was finally letting them out.

"You're always like this, you go out dreading if something happened to me, but you're a fucking hypocrite because I have no idea what the fuck I'd do if something happened to you!"

Dream stepped back, looking away from him.

George was right, and he knew it.

"But unlike you, I trust you. I know you can live, I actually believe in your ability to survive. But you, you refuse to put any faith in me, any at all."

His voice was filled with the same mix of emotions he was. It was angry, but on the verge of breaking down. It was hurt, and it was trying so hard not to be.

"George, it's skill. I've just had more time and practice than you."

"Yeah, and who's to blame for that?" George shot back. "Who's to blame for me not being with you all this fucking time?"

"I didn't want to put you in danger too!" Dream yelled. The composed lie he had been wearing was gone now, it collapsed right in front of him. He wasn't fine, he wasn't calm. He never was.

He was never emotionless like the mask suggested him to be, he was never perfect like he wanted to pretend he was.

He wasn't always happy, he wasn't always smiling. That wasn't who he was, that wasn't who anyone was.

Frankly, that was impossible.

"Sapnap was already stuck in here, I couldn't bear dealing with you in this game too." He admitted, his voice still in pain, still filled with anger.

"But what about me Dream? You don't know how I felt, I couldn't do anything, I just had to watch you die!"

"But you would've been safe there." Dream argued back. "Now you're just forcing me to let you

risk your life over and over again."

George clenched his fists, looking away with a hurt expression in his eyes.

"Do you not fucking see it?" George shot back, grabbing onto Dream's shirt. "That's the exact same thing you're doing to me, only I literally couldn't do anything."

"George-"

"Every night, I couldn't sleep. Every fucking waking hour of the day, I was worried about you. I couldn't do anything, I had no control of the situation. I was just watching you die."

He was breaking, the very memory of it causing him to shake.

Everyday, he was filled with fear, worrying and crying himself to sleep. He couldn't do anything, and it was Dream's fault. All he could do was hope, hope and pray while the people he cared about most died around him.

Dream had died, and there was nothing he could do about it.

"You're being selfish, Dream."

His eyes shot up in shock, him stepping forward. "How am I being selfish, I'm literally doing everything I can to protect you!"

"And you're not seeing it from my perspective, how I care about you too, Dream. How you're just pushing me away in your attempt, your failed attempt at keeping me safe."

"You don't have to care about me George, I don't deserve it." He said, looking away, out at the rain.

He was too guilt-ridden.

Guilt for having killed someone, for having killed people he didn't know could not respawn.

Guilt for being alive, for respawning when others around him died.

It wasn't his fault, but the guilt ate at him anyways.

"You're always like this. You don't see, you don't understand." George spat out. "You never do, you never did."

Silence followed, as the rain around them fell.

"Do you know how it feels, to be pushed aside all the time, to be shoved away as nothing but a burden?"

"You're not a burden, George."

"And you say that but you treat me like one, and you know what I am. I should be dead and I know it, you were right."

"So you acknowledge that you almost died?"

He looked away, biting his lip before nodding.

"In that case, what do you want to do, do it again?" Dream fought back. "You tell me you now you almost got yourself killed, and yet you're out here wanting to tell me that I was wrong in trying to stop that?!"

George looked back at Dream, tears falling from his eyes.

Pouring like the rain surrounding them, carrying the emotions he'd been holding back for so long.

"I-I don't know."

He really didn't. He was so confused, so conflicted with himself. And that part of him was coming crashing down.

He didn't even know what outcome he wanted out of this, what he was looking for.

"Of course you don't. You're here arguing with me over what?"

"I don't know anymore, okay?" He leaned back on the tree, sinking down hugging himself as the rain grew colder and colder.

And Dream sat next to him, keeping a safe distance away, but neither spoke.

Both were too filled with their own emotions.

Only difference was George wore his heart on his sleeve, in his voice, his expression, and his words. People could so easily tell what he was thinking.

But within himself, his feelings were a mess, he didn't know how he even truly felt about the situation, if he was even in the right. People knew what he was thinking, people could practically read his thoughts.

People knew, and yet he didn't know. He doubted himself, being drowned in his own thoughts and emotions.

And Dream hid all of it behind a mask, away from the eyes of the public, away from the eyes of his own best friend, both figuratively and literally.

He knew how he felt about the situation, and it's simply that he hated it. He hated the risk and the chance of death. He was angry and guilty, but he kept it to himself, refusing to let anyone in.

Two different people, expressing their feelings to one another as the rain continuously poured around them.

No one spoke for a bit, no one even so much as looked at one another, neither could bear doing so.

The atmosphere wasn't tense, but it wasn't empty anymore either. Rather it was missing, longing.

George sat there hiding his tears under his goggles, his little shield to hide away his emotions, his way of pretending, of continuing to pretend.

Dream's demeanor softened slightly, looking at his friend. "So then what is it George, what do you want?"

But George didn't answer the question, rather he hugged his legs, silently looking back at his friend. "You know, I'm scared, Dream." He choked out, as if he was hesitating to say it.

"Of what? Of you dying? It really doesn't seem that way."

"I don't know either." He replied, his heart aching a little bit at his words.

He really didn't know anything. Not about this game, not about his friend, not about himself.

Things he thought he knew, he didn't anymore.

He thought Dream trusted him. But that turned out to be a lie, one not only Dream told him, but one he told himself.

"And what do you know?" Dream asked, looking back at George who turned away in response.

He sighed. "Nothing, apparently."

"Then why are you scared?"

"Cause I almost died, isn't that obvious?"

There was more, they both knew it.

George took a deep breath, sighing to himself. "And maybe because you almost did too, maybe cause it seems you're never ever going to understand me."

"Why's that?"

George let out a quick empty chuckle. Hollow, empty, not exactly forced, but one that might as well never have existed.

If this was Dream's attempt at solving things, at fixing this mess, it wasn't going to work.

"You just don't get it do you?" He spat out, watching as Dream lightly shook his head. "You don't trust me Dream, and at this point I don't even trust myself."

"George, I trust you." Dream said in an attempt to make George feel better, to cheer him up.

George scoffed, a pained expression on his face. "That's a lie."

It really was. It was a white lie, clear as day.

Dream didn't respond, he couldn't respond, as he knew George was right.

He didn't trust his own best friend, because he was scared the moment he did, he would lose him.

He couldn't trust George because he meant too much to him, as ironic as that may be.

That if George knew everything about him, that if he gave George everything, he wouldn't like it. That he wouldn't like the rest of himself, that he wouldn't like Dream.

So instead, he kept pretending.

That smile on his mask, that was him pretending.

"It's cause I'm afraid George." He finally said, choking on his words for George to look at him in shock.

"You're afraid of trusting me? That sucks." George replied nonchalantly, looking back out onto the

lake, surrounded by the pouring rain.

Dream could still sense his anger, but it was more or less covered up, the only thing left in his voice being a strange sense of hurt.

Hurt from not being trusted by his own best friend.

"I'm sorry George."

"I know." He replied, not looking back at him. "But that doesn't change anything does it?"

George was trying so hard to sound emotionless, how much he wished he was. He wanted this to not matter to him, he wanted Dream to not matter to him.

But no matter how hard he tried, he just couldn't shake him off.

The person who didn't trust him whatsoever, was the person George trusted most.

"I was scared of losing you George." He choked. "I was scared you'd hate me for it, like others do."

Like Dream does for himself.

But of course George already knew that. He had already spoken about it just moments earlier, how it hurt him. George wasn't that kind of person, Dream was too important for him just let go of him that way.

Dream just meant too much to him, for one reason or another.

But hearing Dream say it, hearing those words come out of his mouth, it just meant so much more to him. That he was actually telling George how he felt, rather than hiding his emotions away for him to find out himself.

That small thing, it mattered a lot to him.

George smiled, though he didn't even mean to, looking back at his friend. "I'm never going to hate you Dream. I could never hate you, I know that now."

Dream looked back at him, watching George's expressions shift. Watching his emotions shift. "What makes you think that?"

He smiled again, he didn't want to. He wanted to be angry, he wanted to be hurt. He was, and yet he was still smiling.

"Because God, you don't know how much I want to hate you right now Dream. You don't know how much I wish I could, but I just can't." He admitted. "I can't hate you, and it fucking sucks."

George chuckled, leaning back onto the tree. "You kept me away from you for so long, you kept so many secrets, hell- you don't even trust me. But I still can't hate you." He looked back at his friend, a soft, no longer fake smile on his face.

Dream smiled, as George looked away again, his expression shifting back to what it was just moments before.

"Believe me, I've been trying to."

More silence, and for the first time that night, it was a quiet, comfortable silence.

"George?"

George didn't want to respond. He wanted to run away, the pain in his chest suffocating him. He was still angry, he was still hurt.

He wanted to snap, to just crumble down. He wanted to hate him, to hate Dream.

But he just couldn't fucking do it.

"Hmm?" He hummed back, his head still buried in his legs as he looked back at him. "What is it?"

He wanted to just stand and run so badly, he wanted to just walk away from him.

But he couldn't bring himself to do it. He still found himself shifting towards his friend, staring back at him as the rain around them fell.

He couldn't hate Dream, no matter how hard he tried. And he just had to accept that.

"I trust you, George." Dream said, obviously smiling under his mask. "I really truly do."

He chuckled, looking away averting his gaze back at the lake. "No, you don't, and that's fine. You don't have to, you really shouldn't actually."

"No, George. It's a promise, I trust you." Dream repeated.

He hugged his legs, shivering in the cold. "It's fine, Dream, I don't mind anymore, there's no need to pretend you do." He said, the anger from earlier slowly fading away, instead being replaced by a strange sense of acceptance.

Him trying to accept that things would always stay this way, that he'd have to live with this as their friendship, this hollow mess. That Dream would keep secrets from him, that it would never get further than it was right now. He was telling himself that he was okay with that, that it was fine.

But that was a lie. Another one of his built up lies.

He wanted Dream to trust him, he wanted that more than anything in the world. He wanted that feeling of knowing that George would be the first person he runs to when he has a problem. He wanted to be what Dream was for him.

Though he never would, and that was just something he'd have to accept.

And maybe he was fine with that. Maybe that was okay.

If he had to pick between continuing this thin line of trust they had or cutting it all off, he was fine with it.

He could deal with being pushed away, he could deal with what they had. All he wanted was that he never lose him, that he never lose his best friend.

And he knew why he couldn't lose him, and it sucked.

But the fear in the back of George's mind was still there, taunting him. That he could still die at any point in time, that they were still stuck in this game.

That his problem was nothing in the grand scheme of things, that he was nothing.

They were still in danger, he had just risked his life for this. His wither effect was still there, and he was still carrying that same fear. That fear that followed him wherever he went, that fear that had just become a part of him.

And yet even though he knew that compared to the prospect of death, this little issue between them was absolutely nothing, that didn't even matter to him.

For now, Dream was more important.

He just didn't want to mind it, not now, he just wanted to put it all away. He was bottling up his feelings again.

At this rate, he'd have to get used to it.

"I love you George."

George snickered at the sudden statement, not bothering to look back at him as he rolled his eyes. "And where the fuck did that come from?"

"My heart." Dream dramatically said, placing his hand on his chest.

George laughed again. "My God, you're such an idiot." He said, giggling as he suddenly remembered why Dream meant so much to him.

Because just like that, he was smiling.

He always had that effect on him, that ability to brighten his day whenever he felt like it. Dream carried his heart with him, George had unknowingly given it to him.

He hated that.

And yet when George looked back to face his friend, something was different about the teary eyed smile Dream wore on his face, for it wasn't fake, it wasn't even covered up.

He almost had to do a double take, tilting his head slightly to the side as he examined his friend's expression.

Because it felt so real, it almost felt like a dream.

And yet it wasn't.

Slowly, George pulled off his glasses, holding his breath. He almost couldn't believe what he was seeing, only sitting still, not bothering to say a word.

He couldn't say a word, he had none.

No words to describe what he was feeling, no words to describe what this actually meant to him. He couldn't think of any, he didn't know what to say.

He was absolutely speechless.

And as Dream looked back at his friend, making eye-contact with him for the first time, George just blinked back in shock. This was real, they were actually seeing each other.

The people behind the screens, the two best friends who were too scared of losing one another.

Their emotions were out, their secrets were out, and George could finally admire those beautiful green eyes, the ones he'd been waiting years to see.

Because finally, after all this time, Dream could truly trust him.

And that trust, it meant everything.

Dream had taken off his mask.

Chapter End Notes

Im so sorry this was late, there was a lot of work put into this chapter.

I genuinely have no idea how good or bad it is, I really don't. I hope its acceptable for a scene as important as this lol. I really really hope its not bad omg Im terrified to post this Ill be honest.

Also, I don't think I can post a chapter next monday. This was 7k words btw, so I hope it was worth the wait. Ill probably post the Monday after.

haha what if i made a discord server?

Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream was beautiful.

And George was completely and utterly speechless.

He just sat there, unsure of how to react as Dream awkwardly shifted between smiles and light bursts of laughter.

Because this was Dream, his best friend's face, his mask off.

His eyes were the most stunning shade of green George would never get to truly see. And his smile, finally completely shown, more real and perfect than he could ever have imagined it.

Then there was silence, but it wasn't awkward, nor was it tense or empty. It was more so two people, processing how much this moment meant to them, what it truly was.

It was a lot, it meant a lot.

Dream was wearing the brightest smile he could muster as he looked back at his friend, giggling lightly at his reaction.

His smile, tainted by tears.

Tears from the conversation that was just moments ago, tears stemming from the conflict between them and tension of the situation. Tears from the fear of losing his best friend, a fear that followed him around everywhere he went. A fear that would never truly leave him.

Tears that would have gone unnoticed, unseen if it weren't for the removal of his mask.

But now his emotions were out, and those doubts were gone, finally visible, no longer hidden by his mask.

He chuckled again, but George found the laugh so much more comforting, seeing his friend's expression soften and face beam into a glowing smile along with it.

That smile that felt so real, so genuine. Nothing like the one he wore on his mask, just a fake, used to hide the hurt underneath.

Dream suddenly leaned in closer, clasping George's hands close to his chest, an unmistakable expression on his face.

So unmistakable, and yet George couldn't quite put his finger on it.

So familiar, and yet George couldn't quite tell what it was.

"I trust you George." He said, his dimples showing as he looked back at his friend. His tone was happy, seemingly free and open, and yet George could hear the small cracks in his voice.

Dream was nervous.

He could tell that, and he found it amusing. But he could also hear the fear beneath his voice, an emotion he was trying so hard to repress, to keep away.

Fear from the risk of losing his best friend, of messing everything up more than he already had.

This was his attempt at fixing it, at mending their friendship.

And that attempt started with trust, it had to start with trust.

A small giggle escaped George's lips, as he sent his friend a smile, not bothering to argue back for he already knew it was true.

He really did. Dream truly did trust him.

Or at least he was trying to, and that was good enough for him.

That was good enough, it was more than enough.

And just knowing that brought an unmistakable warm feeling into George's chest as he tried his best to stifle back his tears.

Tears of joy, pure and utter joy.

In a quick movement, he let go of Dream's hands, throwing him into a hug as he buried his face into his shirt, feeling comfort at the sudden warmth it brought.

The moment was so perfect, almost as if it was planned, staged and brought to life by the world around them.

This was Dream, and he was finally seeing him.

It was better than he ever could have imagined it.

He clutched tighter onto his shirt, not pulling away to hide the tears flowing down his face as Dream hugged back, neither saying any words to one another.

The only sound was the pattering rain around them, something that all of a sudden had a completely different meaning.

The sadness the rain carried was gone, and the emptiness in the atmosphere was broken.

Instead replaced with happiness, with pure joy and bliss. And if he was being honest, George wasn't used to it.

George pulled away first, his expression lit up in a goofy grin as he looked at his friend again.

The moment just seemed so unreal, as if pulled straight out of his imagination, his dreams.

He had been waiting for this for years, yet in the moment of it, he had no idea what to say, he just felt lost.

He wanted to pull some witty remark, about how Dream looked like shit, worse than he ever could have imagined. He lightly snickered at the thought, imagining the laughs he would have gotten out of that, and how funny it would have been.

And yet even as he tried to say it out loud, his throat ran dry and he couldn't manage to do it.

Maybe because it was such an obvious lie, or maybe just the fact that he was in too much of a state of shock to say anything at all.

And yet he felt like he needed to say something, so he resorted to saying the first thing that came up in his mind.

"Y-you're pretty." He stuttered, the words leaving his mouth before he could stop them, and Dream felt his cheeks burn up in a blush, as he looked away in embarrassment.

A part of him was sure he would regret saying it, that Dream would just end up teasing him about it. And yet when he glanced back at his cheeks, tinted in a light pink, he laughed to himself deciding it was worth it.

George really didn't think he would blush, heck, he didn't even think it was possible, but I guess that was a part of him just wearing that mask all the time.

He wasn't used to having to hide his blush like George was.

Dream laughed, desperately looking towards the ground, a grin plastered on his face. "Thanks? You too I guess."

George let out laugh, as Dream laughed back, taking glances at his friend's smile, and it felt so perfect, so real.

This was real.

He had pictured a million scenarios in his head to how this would go. How he would get to see his friend's face for the first time. A part of him imagined a simple video call, while another part of him was secretly hoping he'd fly out to the UK to meet him.

And then there was that thought in the back of his mind that he would just never see him, that it would never happen.

But this moment was real, and it was more than he could have imagined it being.

He giggled again, tilting his head to the side. "This is really not how I thought this was gonna go."

"What? To have me literally take off my iconic smiley face mask in front of you, in some crazy rainy storm inside of Minecraft?" He questioned back, sarcasm laced in his voice, as George rolled his eyes at him. "Yeah, me neither."

Laughter filled the air as the tense atmosphere from earlier faded away. In the back of their minds, there was still fear within them, but neither chose to act on it, they were used to it now.

No one wanted to ruin the moment, the moment they had been waiting so long for.

That moment where they could finally stop being scared. Where they could stop pretending. Where they could finally trust one another.

"Dream, come closer." George giggled, as Dream shifted towards him an amused smirk plastered on his face.

George leaned in a bit closer, jokingly cupping Dream's face in his hands as he squished his cheeks playfully, squishing and pinching them, like a parent would do for their 2 year old child, giggling to himself.

God, this was so awkward.

It was probably the cringiest shit to watch, and yet neither of them could even bother to care about that. Dream just remained in a pout, his eyes looking away from George as he filled the little space around them with laughter.

Because Dream was blushing, and it was so painfully obvious. It was clear as day, and no one could deny it.

"Dream, you're so pink!" He finally said, causing his friend to shoot up and turn away.

He started chuckling in an attempt to hide it, as George just watched him with a grin. "What?! How can you even see that? Aren't you colorblind?"

"I can distinguish pinks from your normal pale skin tone, thank you. Besides, like actually, you look so fucking pink." He laughed, not bothering to sugarcoat it.

"I'm not."

"You are, Dream." Dream knew he was and as much as he wanted to, couldn't deny it.

He pouted again, before biting his lip as he pushed away his friend. "Fine maybe a little bit, but it's only cause your hands were warm, and it's just really cold right now."

George raised an eyebrow at him, rolling his eyes once again as he leaned back onto the tree.

"Yeah sure- Whatever you say. Just didn't think you were the type to blush so easily."

"Says you." He countered, causing George to lightly punch him on the shoulder.

And he couldn't keep his eyes off of him, taking in every little feature about his friend, from how his eyes smiled along with him, and the freckles all over his face.

The freckles were cute, Dream was cute.

Damn it.

"You're staring, George." Dream laughed, as he immediately looked away. "And now you're blushing too, fucking hypocrite."

"Your fault for calling me out, besides, what else am I supposed to do? This is the first time I've seen your face."

"So you admit that you think I'm pretty?"

"I just did." Though it was on accident, he didn't bother denying it, watching as his friend gave him the smuggest look imaginable.

"And what about me do you find pretty?" Dream asked, as George just pushed him away.

Yeah no- he was not going to answer that question.

"Nothing, and most definitely not your personality." He smiled as he replied, while Dream just stood there, laughing, his laugh perfectly accompanied by his smile. His delicate smile, glowing, even through the rain.

His smile that held so much more emotion, so much more meaning than the one he wore on his

mask.

"Oh come on, I'll tell you what I find pretty about you." He said, as George raised another eyebrow. "Just tell me, what makes me so pretty, George."

A small chuckle left him, as George sent him a proud smirk. "That's not fair, because I already know what it is, Dream"

"And what is it?"

"Everything."

Dream burst into another fit of laughter as George followed suit, lightly giggling as his friend rolled his eyes.

"You're the fucking worst." Dream deadpanned, causing George to laugh in response, as he leaned him closer, lightly blinking like a small child.

"Oh, but you can still tell me if you want." He nagged on, causing Dream to just roll his eyes.

"It's nothing." He sarcastically replied.

"Well, thanks."

Dream smirked, before looking back at his friend. "You changed the topic, we were talking about how I was pretty."

"No, you changed the topic to how I was pretty, so I would tell you how you were pretty." He said, forcing a frown.

Dream just chuckled, leaning closer to George. "But I am in fact pretty."

"And how big is your ego?" George retorted, a forced frown on his face as Dream only smiled back.

"Not sure, wanna test it out?" Dream looked at George, grinning.

"No."

George stifled in another laugh, because God did he miss these conversations, where in they could just mess around with a stupid topic. Even if that topic was 'Dream's prettiness'. And even if that topic was making George feel so fucking strange inside.

It was such a familiar feeling.

God, he hated that feeling.

That feeling that caused his heart to pound in his chest, that feeling that kept crawling back to him whenever he was around his friend.

And yet despite hating it, he couldn't help but smile.

A conversation just like this was enough to make him happy.

Dream was enough to make him happy.

George took another glance at his friend, before abruptly looking away, trying to look back at the lake in front of them instead, but that was a harder task than it should've been.

Because here he was, sitting next to Dream with his mask removed and his face displayed for everyone to see.

No, not for everyone. Just for George.

His stupidly pretty face, and smile, it was only for him to see.

George was about to make another remark when all of a sudden another familiar pang of pain washed through him.

Suddenly, almost like trauma, he watched as his hearts quickly went down, choking on his breaths as Dream rushed to hold onto him, his blackened hearts shaking in his hot bar.

He didn't want this, he couldn't bear it. Not right now, not like this.

But as the blood seeped out of his bandage, he just closed his eyes as the cut burned him, the pain spreading to every part of his body as he gripped his friend's arms in shock.

And Dream tightened his hold on him, gently rubbing his thumb over his friend's palms as George gripped harder, wincing.

It was quick, but it hurt. It was a sudden burst of pain that he knew was going to disappear in a matter of seconds, and yet it managed to leave scars.

Scars that didn't really exist, and yet scars he could feel as the mere fear of that pain sat within him.

And all of a sudden it was over, and George was just left there breathless, his heart pounding as it subsided again.

It was the wither effect.

"George, we need to treat that, there's milk back at the base, let's go." Dream said, standing up and reaching out his hand, to which George didn't take.

There was a sudden shift in the mood, from what was just a few seconds ago so happy and playful, was now drenched in fear. A mood was far too familiar to both of them.

George hugged his legs, tugging Dream's arm back down to him. He didn't want to go just yet.

He looked away, doing his best to steady his breathing. "C-can we not go right now?" He pleaded.

Dream frowned, sitting back down next to him. "We need to get you milk, I know that hurt."

It did, it really truly did.

But George just shrugged it off, lightly nodding. "It won't bleed again for a while, the bandage is still fine." He replied. "I just don't want to walk all the way back there in this rain."

That was a lie.

He just wanted the comfort of being here alone with Dream, and the feeling of him sitting down next to him. He still had so much fear in the back of his mind, and he wanted to let it out, to

express his feelings to his best friend.

Fear about the world they were stuck in, about the death and bloodshed that surrounded them. They could die at any minute, they both knew it.

And maybe also because if they went back, Dream would have to put on his mask again. George didn't want it, just seeing his face made him happy enough.

Dream was enough; this time alone, it was enough.

Especially because he knew moments like this wouldn't last long, it wouldn't, it never did. Ever since he had gotten here, it was always just a constant state of stress and panic, there was never any downtime.

Time like this was valuable, rare, and George wasn't just about to throw it away.

And it seemed Dream could sense it too as he clasped George's hand in his own. "Alright, fine. We can stay for a bit."

George shot his friend a grateful smile, seeing his friend's face of pure and utter worry for him.

It made him feel so happy and giddy inside, and God knows if he could've seen that expression behind his mask in the fight earlier, he wouldn't have gone anywhere.

He leaned towards him, tightening his grip on his hand, warmth flooding through him.

"You know, I'm scared, Dream." He said, repeating the same statement from earlier yet in a completely different tone. His voice was still breaking at those words, and yet there was no malice in them, not a sign of anger.

Dream did his best to smile back. "Yeah, I know, and it's okay to be scared." His friend said, gently circling his thumb around on George's palm. "I'm scared too."

"You're scared for me."

"True, but so are you."

George smiled again, that same feeling retching in his stomach.

He was here, seeing the face of his best friend for the first time while people died around him.

He was sitting here, smiling in safety while so many others were dead.

"I should be dead, Dream."

His friend's eyes widened in shock, as George tried so desperately to smile back at him. Smiling with tears falling from his face. Smiling to hide his true emotions, of how afraid he truly was. And even then, Dream could see right through him.

"You saved me, and now look, you're hurt because of it."

"George-"

He winced as he eyed the wound on his friend's stomach. The cut that he deemed as his fault, with Dream doing everything he could to stop Xeno from getting close to George.

"Listen, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for being so reckless, it was my bad." He said, aching in his own words. "But you saved me Dream, so many other people are dead, and yet I'm alive."

Dream's face shifted into that of pity for him, suddenly realizing what he was feeling.

But George didn't know, he couldn't read his own emotions. He hated admitting things to other people, he hated even more having to admit things to himself.

Admitting how he truly felt, because there was a chance he wouldn't like it. There was no right way to feel, and yet George always thought that what he was feeling was wrong.

That he was too afraid, too scared.

But this wasn't that, it was guilt, the same thing that followed Dream wherever he went, and George was feeling it too.

Dream wrapped an arm around George's back, looking back at him. "I should be dead too, you know?" George watched him in shock. "I respawned, remember? I should have died too."

But George looked away, just hearing that bringing him even more fear.

For starters, since Dream had saved him, that meant he was supposed to be dead, twice now.

And secondly, because he just didn't want to think about that. The very thought of Dream being in danger scared him, more than it should have, and just knowing that Dream should have died, just knowing that there was a possibility he could have been dead, that scared him.

It scared him that way because Dream meant too much to him.

"That makes it worse." George bluntly said, and yet Dream was still smiling at him, it was so soft, it was so forced, just a fake, like the one he always had on his mask.

"It just means I know how you feel. It's guilt George, and feeling guilty means you're a good person."

"Hypocrite." George replied, but there wasn't any venom in his words, only a smile on his face from how stupid that was. It was exactly how Dream felt too, Dream was guilty, and that guilt led him to believe he was a bad person for his accidents and mistakes.

Dream didn't think he deserved to live, and at this point, neither did George. It was the exact same feeling and yet Dream could somehow console George without accepting it himself.

But he just ignored that, instead placing his hand over his friend's. "George, people die all the time. That doesn't make it your fault."

"But you just said earlier that I should be dead too."

"I did say that, but that just means that now you have another chance." Dream said. "Like I did, and I used that chance to save you, because you're a fucking idiot."

George snickered a bit at Dream's remark, before looking down once more. "And how do I know that won't just go to waste, that you shouldn't have saved someone else?" George said, faltering in his voice.

"I don't, you don't. Only time can tell I guess."

George frowned, shifting closer next to him as he remembered that scene.

The first death he had witnessed, that of the Steve back at the cell of the hunters. He had sacrificed his only life for them; he had died for their cause.

His wish was for them to beat the game, to free the people trapped inside. That was everyone's wish.

To end this cycle fear and death they were stuck in, to finally rid themselves of this risk that followed them everywhere they went.

To be able to live their lives again, to finally feel safe. For the people with families to go back to, and the children who were wasting their lives away here.

They had to escape.

"So, George, what do you plan to do with it then?"

So it was the obvious answer for him. "I'm gonna free the game, Dream." He replied, a soft, almost unnoticeable smile on his face.

The others who died around him, they were working towards this very same goal.

He was going to accomplish that, that's what he was here for. To save the lives that are left, to help kill the Ender dragon.

This was his choice.

And he wasn't just here to save Dream either, though that's what he initially planned to do. It's not just him anymore.

He wasn't saving Dream, Dream wasn't saving him. They were going to save everyone.

"Nice answer, pretty boring, but good I guess." Dream joked, causing George to roll his eyes at him.

They fell into a short silence, as Dream studied his friend's expression. Still laced with fear, still unsure. He let out a sigh, gently clasping his hand. "But don't ever feel guilty for living."

"I almost got you killed, Dream." George reiterated, trying his best not to look at his friend's cut. That wound he deemed was his fault.

But Dream just smiled back at him, that smile sending a wave of emotions to George,

Good emotions, and yet he hated it.

"That was my fault too though, wasn't it?"

"Huh?"

"I shouldn't have defended you too much like that, we could've gotten out fine if I had just trusted you to fight him with me." George lit up in shock, watching his friend look at him with another soft smile. "I was being overprotective, it's my fault."

George sat still, surprised by his friend's words. He was willing to admit that, and that on its own made George happy.

"And you saved me George, from that potion."

He looked away again, remembering how lucky he was that he broke that. "It wouldn't have even had the chance to kill you if you weren't at such low health from defending me."

"And to defend you was my choice, a wrong choice." Dream replied. "I should have trusted you more, I'm an idiot."

George let out a small giggle. "Yeah you are, but thanks."

They continued to sit together in silence, neither letting go of the other's hand, just quietly watching the rain pour around them.

Dream's mask was off, George still couldn't quite comprehend that, he didn't fully process that fact yet, that Dream had done that.

Willingly, the mask didn't fall off, George didn't just break the thing either.

To show George his face was his decision, a sign of their trust. Proof that he himself wanted George to see it. It was a choice, just like the one they both made to join this game.

A choice of his own will, that in its own meant a lot.

He leaned in towards him once more, dropping his head onto Dream's shoulder subconsciously, smiling at the heat his friend provided.

"I'm sorry, George." He suddenly said, closing his eyes as he leaned on his head. "I'm sorry for pushing you away, for trying to keep you out of the game, for doubting you all the time."

"It's fine, Dream, I forgive you." George said, closing his eyes as his head moved over to his chest, Dream felt so warm, and George just was too tired to think about it.

"It's not fine, I wasn't thinking about how you felt too." Dream sighed. "I couldn't imagine being away from you like that for so long."

George subconsciously smiled. "It's okay, we're here now, that's what matters." He said. It sounded so sappy, and yet George barely even noticed. .

Dream did though, letting out a light chuckle as he brushed his thumb over his hand once again. It was a soft gesture, one that went completely unnoticed by his friend.

"And I promise I'll trust you from now on." Dream continued, making George blink back up in a bit of surprise.

Dream didn't have to make that promise, George wasn't mad anymore. His fear had subsided into the back of his mind, and the tension of the atmosphere was gone.

He didn't have to, and yet he did, he chose to. "We're gonna beat this thing, together this time." He continued, looking back at him.

George smiled back at him, tilting his head. "No more secrets?"

"No more secrets."

"Thanks." George briefly responded, closing his eyes, and trying to shove away that giddy feeling in his chest.

And yet it kept crawling back to him, that familiar feeling that chased him wherever he went.

It was a good feeling, one that never failed to make him happy. It was a good feeling, that he liked and yet he hated more than anything.

He hated it so much because he knew exactly what it was, and he was just afraid. Afraid that the moment he admitted it to himself, it would be too late, too late to change his mind and prevent the heartbreak that would inevitably come with it.

He hated it because he was sure that Dream didn't feel the same way, and it would just lead to more pain in the future.

He didn't want to deal with that, so he kept putting it away, throwing away the very thought of it.

But as he looked at Dream once again, that soft, and very real smile looking down at him, the feeling just crept back up even more.

He laughed to himself, in an attempt to shrug it off, but he really couldn't at this point.

Dream had trusted him. The loose ends were tied, and the secrets were out.

Every doubt, every gripe he had with him was thrown out, the mask was off.

And yet he hated what it meant, or what would happen if his feelings weren't reciprocated.

He hated it, he hated that feeling, and yet kept crawling back. As much as he didn't want to admit it, he knew it was true. He couldn't just keep denying it forever, he couldn't just pretend it didn't exist.

He wanted to, he really wished he could.

But that would have been lying to himself, and he's been doing that far too often recently.

Lies, to cover up the feelings he didn't want to be real. A simple lie he told himself, a simple lie he told the world, just so he could keep pretending.

Pretending that there was nothing there, for the same fear Dream carried with him. He was afraid the moment he admitted it to himself, he would lose him. That he would lose Dream.

He was afraid of Dream hating him for it, of ruining their friendship that he valued so much over everything.

And the funny thing was, Dream was too. He was afraid of running their friendship, and it's the whole reason he found it so hard to give that trust.

And yet, he knew deep down Dream wasn't that type of person, to ditch a friendship just like that. Neither of them were and still that was a fear that was still drenched into his mind.

But as he watched Dream smile back at him again, his soft comforting smile making George grin back at him, he knew it was true.

He had to accept it.

Whatever happened after this, it didn't matter to him.

Because it was true, it was so painfully obvious.

He smiled, the realization finally sinking in as he leaned further into his friend's chest.

The simple reason his friend followed him in his thoughts, the reason why he never failed to make him smile. The reason why his trust meant so much to him, and the reason George just couldn't hate him no matter how hard he tried.

George couldn't hate him, quite the opposite actually.

He sighed to himself, finally understanding himself, his feelings, his emotion. All of it, he knew what they meant now.

He knew it, and he absolutely hated it.

He was in love with his best friend. George loved Dream.

Chapter End Notes

Okay so im gonna make a discord server soon, we're setting it up lol.

Im also awful at writing anything related to romance... im very very bad lol this is the best I can do

Yay its on time pog

Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Liking Dream had always been a weird feeling.

And actually knowing that he liked Dream, actually admitting it to himself and acknowledging the fact was even weirder.

George had assumed that things would change, even if it was by a little bit. That was part of the reason he was so afraid of it. He didn't want to jeopardize the friendship they had, he didn't want his interactions with his best friend to change. But if he was being honest, barely anything did.

He knew why. It wasn't that he just liked him now all of a sudden. He had liked him for months; almost a year, really.

What he felt towards him was the same. It was always like this.

His heart always skipped a beat around him, he was always happy to be with him. He cared about Dream, he always did.

The only thing different was that he could actually admit he was feeling that way. Now he wasn't in denial.

He missed the excuses of being able to shrug off the skips in his heart when his friend laughed, and being able to ignore every time he blushed.

He couldn't do that anymore, he didn't have that same escape.

That's all that has changed.

Oh, and the fact that George was sitting in one of the makeshift storage rooms, practically staring at an unmasked Dream.

The mask was off. That was the best part of it.

Because George just adored looking at Dream's face, even if it was for a little bit. His stupidly pretty smile, and piss-yellow eyes.

More than anything, it made George want to see green, just so he could actually, truly see his friend.

Maybe friend wasn't the right word anymore.

"If someone comes in, just warn me," Dream said, taking some blaze rods from the chest, transferring it into an enderchest right next to it.

It was the third day since Dream had removed the mask, and it's almost as if he made an effort to keep it off around George, at least when he had the chance. When they were alone together just talking, the mask was always kept off.

And it was the third day since the hunters were killed. And all the players with them were getting ready to leave again; they had more than enough blaze rods.

George took another glance at the rods, a sigh of relief leaving him.

Because the blaze fight was a complete success, at least from what he had heard. They were able to completely encase and surround all the spawners, placing water in cauldrons nearby.

They may not have been ready for the hunters, but they were certainly more prepared for this.

The blaze fight was something they had been planning for, strategizing about. And within just a few days they were able to farm more than enough blaze rods with the only interference being the blazes themselves.

And compared to the enemies they just faced, it was much easier than they thought it would be.

Still, both Dream and George completely sat out of the blaze fight, along with the rest of the injured players. There was really no more urgency, there was really no need to.

The hunters were gone, the distance from here was weeks away. It was the least of their concerns, they had more than enough time.

They didn't want to risk it, no one did, and for the first time, they didn't have to.

Though their wounds were almost completely healed, with Dream's barely being a scar and George's wither effect finally gone.

George watched as Dream shoved the rest of the rods into the enderchest, a large grin on his face.

A grin that everyone seemingly shared, just waiting to head back.

To George, it was nothing more than a simple base.

But for Dream, he'd been stuck here months, that base was almost like a safe haven, a home to him.

George smiled back, sharing the same happiness with his friend. "Are we actually going to travel for another two weeks?" He complained. "It was so far. I don't wanna go again."

"We're travelling through the nether George." Dream chuckled, causing George to blink back in shock.

George frowned, subconsciously leaning closer. "But didn't we purposely not do that last time?"

"George, what do you think everyone else's been doing while we were here?" Dream asked, looking back at him with a smug smirk on his face.

"How am I supposed to know?" George replied back, trying to ignore how his cheeks heated up slightly when Dream laughed in response.

He missed his excuses. He missed his denial.

Dream closed the chest, sitting on it. "Callahan and like thirty others have been making us an easy path through the nether to here for the past few weeks." He explained. "Digging through all the walls, and bridging over the lava, they got here a day ago, and according to them the route's already been safety proofed."

George just nodded back at him, it made sense, and a sigh of relief left him, knowing that he wouldn't have to spend another two weeks walking back.

"Plus, it means we don't have to deal with the chance of running into the hunters in the overworld." He added. "It should only be a two day trip, one if we're fast enough."

George hummed in response, smiling back. "That's a smart plan."

"Really?"

"Yep," he replied, tilting his head back. "Saves time and probably lives."

Dream smirked, a smug look in his eyes as he leaned closer to his friend. "Thanks, I made it."

His face suddenly dropped into a playful frown. One he had to try so hard for it not to break. "Never mind, the plan sucks," George retorted, causing Dream to burst out into wheezes of laughter. And George followed suit, content with the time he was spending with his friend.

Times like this, he missed them.

Suddenly the door burst open, and Dream immediately looked away, reaching for his white mask as George ran in front of him in an attempt to cover him, before realizing who it was.

"You idiots know I've already seen what he looks like, right?" Sappnap said with a laugh as George rolled his eyes. "I got to see him first before you, George."

"Holy shit Sappnap, don't do that!" Dream said, dramatically placing his hand over his chest. "You gave me a heart attack."

He just smiled, chuckling as he stayed by the door.

Sappnap was the first person to know Dream had revealed his face to George after he had seen them cuddling next to each other under the tree. Safe to say he didn't bother interrupting them till the next day, after Dream had carried back a sleeping George.

And he teased them, he most definitely teased them.

"Just keep your mask on, idiot." He laughed, causing both Dream and George to pout. "Unless you like keeping it off when George is around or something."

"For a matter of fact, yes I do like keeping it off around him." Dream replied back, still smirking and causing George to blush slightly. If he was being honest, he really didn't expect Dream to take his mask off at all after that night.

And yet he did, simple actions like those, they meant a lot to him.

Sappnap frowned at Dream's response, causing them both to laugh. "Is there a problem with that? Oh Sappitus Nappitus." George asked, causing him to roll his eyes.

"He's just unfair, he takes his mask off around you all the time, and he still keeps it on around me." Sappnap complained as George giggled.

"It's not like you ask me to take it off." Dream countered back. "Besides, it's not like I purposely hide it around you either."

"Well did George ask you to keep it off around him?" He fought back, causing Dream to let out a nervous chuckle as George shook his head. "Yeah, see? He didn't."

George laughed with him, waiting for a response before his friend briefly draped an arm around his

shoulder, almost mocking their height difference.

He pulled George closer to him, causing a light blush to form on his cheeks. "It's cause George is special, Sapnap." He teased, sticking out a tongue to which he just rolled his eyes.

"Yeah, yeah, I get it. I'm third wheeling." Sapnap joked. "No need to rub it in."

They all shared a laugh, George's cheeks tainted in a light pink as his smile brightened.

Yeah, it was times like this he missed. It was times like this they all missed.

Sapnap cut them short as he walked out of the door, keeping it open as he peeked his head out. "Well, I just came to make sure you had all your stuff left in storage, but I ended up just third wheeling on some date." He said, causing George to roll his eyes.

"This was not a date." He corrected him, as Sapnap just let out a tired sigh.

"Whatever you say Georgie Weorgie." He laughed, before closing the door on them.

The pair followed soon after, packing their items and getting ready to leave again.

George begrudgingly watched as Dream placed his mask back on, not noticing himself staring until Dream had opened the door, playfully gesturing for him to go outside.

He really did like him, didn't he?

He let out a light laugh as they walked outside, sticking close to one another as they noticed the crowd of people, all gathered together in the forest.

And as George looked around at them all, he almost immediately noticed the smiles the players all wore. They all seemed so happy, so relieved. He wasn't used to it, but it was a good change of pace.

And every smile, it reminded him of Dream.

Because their expressions were so real, so genuine. Just like Dream's was.

Even he knew that was too much of a stretch, to have the simple act of smiling remind him of his friend, but it didn't really matter much to him, he had pretty much accepted it after all. That Dream was always in his thoughts, that he had been carrying these feelings for months now.

This was just a part of it, having accepted his feelings.

And he couldn't really tell if he hated it or not.

Most players were saying goodbye. To friends from other bases, smiles littering their conversations from the pure and utter joy they felt.

And for some others, these goodbyes were more solemn. Goodbyes to people that had just lost their lives.

To the 4000 people that had died.

It was something that had almost slipped George's mind, something that he had not wanted to think about. And yet he couldn't forget it, he couldn't forget the feeling of guilt he was carrying.

He knew that death was inevitable here, it was just unavoidable. A part of the reality they lived in.

He had accepted that, not everyone could live through this.

But that didn't mean he was okay with that.

He lowered his head at the thought, just standing still, almost overwhelmed by the large crowd of people there, instinctively grasping Dream's hand. His friend shot him an empty look as Wilbur approached them, wearing the same smile everyone else did.

Only his smile seemed to be tainted. Tainted by an emotion George hadn't yet truly experienced, one he didn't want to have to.

Remorse. Sadness. Grief.

"Hey, there!" He called out, Niki trailing behind him, their hands clasped together as they walked towards them.

Dream waved back as George sent them a smile, looking towards Wilbur's leg.

He remembered seeing him inflicted with the wither effect back at the fortress, but his injury seemed to have healed too, that was a good sign. "Your leg's okay right?" He asked.

"Yeah, it's better." Niki answered, nodding her head. "Thanks a lot for letting me use the milk on him by the way, he might not have survived without it."

George's smile grew brighter, as Dream gripped his hand tighter, almost trying to tell him he did good, and that was the right choice. And also telling him that he should never be that selfless and risky ever again.

He chuckled lightly, finding Dream's response amusing, as he looked back at them both. "It's fine, he needed it more anyways."

The couple smiled back as they continued on the conversation. It was mostly just small talk, catching up on the time they had lost. A conversation George felt slightly awkward in participating in. After all, they had been here for months, he had barely even passed four weeks.

And yet it felt like he was saying a final goodbye to friend he would never see again. Wilbur was from a different base, and with their chat code cracked, communication was almost impossible.

Any of them could be targeted and hunted down the next day, and the only thing they would get is a death message announcing it.

And despite that thought, the mood remained happy, fulfilling almost, everyone too focused on their victory, what they had achieved that day.

And as the conversation dragged on, Wilbur took notice of their linked hands, smiling once more.

"Did you finally tell him about the whole Mojang thing?" He asked Dream, who only shook his head.

"I wish I did, I didn't get to." He replied, guilt dripping from his voice. But George only leaned closer to him, gesturing that it was fine.

"If you're talking about that rumor, no. Xeno had to tell me." George explained, though there was no anger in his voice. He looked back up towards his friend, more specifically his mask, smiling. "I got something more important out of this idiot."

Wilbur looked back at them confused, before the realization hit him, his eyes making his way to his mask. He immediately smiled back at them, that same tainted smile. Sad, and yet genuinely happy. "Was about time wasn't it?"

Dream nodded back as George only laughed in response, too bothered by his facial expression.

Wilbur seemed happy, he really did. But he could tell there was something beneath him, something bothering him.

He was keeping something in, just like everyone else was. In a way, he was pretending too.

He was about to ask about it, when Dream beat him to it.

"Hey, are you okay? You look like something's bothering you." Dream said, as Niki looked back at him too, concern visible on her face.

"Wilbur?" She asked, not receiving a response for a while.

They all stood in silence for a bit, Wilbur avoiding eye contact with the group before slowly forcing a fake laughter, the words seemingly leaving in chokes. "I don't know, I guess-"

He paused, solemnly looking towards the sky, his demeanor relaxing as the words left his mouth.

"I guess, I just wish Techno was here too."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this chapter was shorter than usual, I kinda just needed a break.

And sorry I havent been responding to comments recently, I'll get to that lol, I just havent found the time to sit down and do it

Btw, I recommend checking out Joshy_37 's chapter analysis from like chapter 17 or smth? Its really long and comprehensive and actually a great read, I honestly cant believe someone would put in that much effort to thoroughly analyze every chapter. Theyre probably gonna do one here, so just check it out, I feel bad I havent gotten to respond it yet :)

Thanks you all, discord server is in the works

Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Sorry its a bit late :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Was George supposed to like parties?

He didn't really care if he was supposed to, he really didn't like parties.

They were always far too crowded. It was suffocating for him, to be forced into conversations with people he didn't even know, to be cramped in a place he would much rather leave.

And although this wasn't exactly a party in that sense, it sure as hell felt like one.

George sat in the center of the celebratory group, in the dining hall, awkwardly smiling as Sapnap draped an arm over his shoulder, cheers enveloping them.

Dream was right, the trip back home was fast. Teams had dug straight through the walls of the Nether, creating a safe path to the portal, and besides that one ghast accident, they were home before they knew it.

They were alive, they had made it out. The blaze rods had been secured.

And that made them one step closer to beating the game, one step closer to being freed.

Freed from the tyrannical fear that controlled all of them. Freed from the pain and loss that came with it.

This was the first real celebration George had seen in a while, the last announcement being too filled of fear and worry.

But this was genuine happiness, relief, and after so long of the opposite, he almost wasn't used to it.

The dining hall was completely full, every single player from their base was gathered there. It was a celebration, a celebration of their victory, of what they had accomplished.

Which made him feel guilty that he hated being here so much, especially when everyone around him was so happy. But he really couldn't help it.

And it was loud. Really loud. George winced as Sapnap unintentionally screamed cheers into his ear right next to him.

"Sapnap!" He yelled out, knowing he probably wouldn't be heard. And he was right, his friend just ignored him, continuing to laugh and smile like everyone else.

Sapnap was happy, so very happy. He was so unbelievably relieved.

He deserved this, they all deserved this.

"Is it possible that he might get drunk?" Bad whispered to George across the dining table, eyeing Sapnap who was uncontrollably laughing at him.

"There's no alcohol here," George replied, as he pushed Sapnap's arm off of him, scooting towards the other direction. Anywhere away from him. "But he probably will anyways. Since he's you know, Sapnap."

Sapnap looked at him, faking a pout, as he went to stand up from where they were eating to celebrate with the crowd.

It was just a bunch of incoherent yells. Yells of pure joy and relief, yet a chaotic mess and nothing more.

A bunch of people were gathered at the center throwing down their weapons, others even breaking them to show that they were done. They were done with this.

They would never have to go into the nether again, it was over.

And although George appreciated the sentiment, he found himself feeling drowned in the crowd of voices, instinctively shifting closer to the person next to him.

Closer to Dream.

George didn't mind the contact, almost completely passing over it due to the overwhelming number of players surrounding them.

And yet he found himself inching even closer to his friend, grabbing onto his arm, almost wanting to pull him away.

Dream laughed at him, almost immediately noticing his uncomfortableness with the situation. George was always like this. "Hey George, do you want to dance with me?"

He blinked back up in shock, eyeing him like he was crazy, as Bad just giggled in the background. "What? Dance, where?"

He smirked, his mouth visible as his mask was pulled slightly up, still hiding his eyes, yet showing his dimples and smile. "There might be a couple's dance later, at least if everyone calms down. I'm asking you if you want to dance?"

George's face flushed as he looked away to hide it. "Oooo, you two should totally dance!" Bad cheered, causing him to move away. "It'll be like a date."

"Not a date." George quickly shot back, throwing his shades over his eyes.

"Whatever you say Georgie." Dream retorted, causing George's blush to deepen, as he jokingly crossed his arms, looking away.

It didn't mean that if he was admitting something to himself, he was willing to admit it to anyone else.

"Not like a date, deal?" He reiterated, causing Bad to sigh and Dream to just tilt his head.

He couldn't really see Dream's reaction, but he nodded in response, standing up and reaching his hand out to George which he didn't take, instead looking back at him with a forced frown.

He didn't move, keeping his hands crossed. "Say it."

"Say what?" Dream asked, causing George to roll his eyes.

"That it's not a date." He repeated. "I just need to make sure."

Dream snickered at his response, and George just frowned at him. "Fine, it's not a date."

His expression immediately shifted back to the smile he'd been holding in, as he took his friend's hand.

"Okay Bad, we'll go on our 'not date', and you make sure Sapnap doesn't vomit." Dream said, as he pulled George away from the eating table waving goodbye.

"Alright, bye!" He waved back. "Oh, and be sure to tell me about the dance later."

George blushed, but he didn't bother to hide it, knowing Dream couldn't see his face. He instead focused on his friend's hand as Dream pulled him through the hall, towards where they were going.

And if he was being honest with himself, he wasn't really looking forward to it. He hated crowded places, they almost felt draining to him, and as they approached closer, the noise of the crowd started ringing in his ears. He almost felt like wincing, steadying his pace as they approached closer.

Only Dream didn't stop as they continued to walk through the crowd, and even as George let go of his grip on Dream's hand to find a spot to dance, they still kept on walking.

From the corner of George's eye he watched Tommy go on stage, the child grinning widely as he yelled and cheers followed soon after. The kid was happy, anyone could tell that.

It made him smile a bit too, but he didn't get to hear anything Tommy said as they quickly left the hall, Dream dragging him away. And as they walked out into the night sky, George found himself smiling at his friend.

"What? Dream, where are we going?" George asked, as Dream just chuckled at him. "I thought we were dancing?"

He used his free hand, and after double checking that there were no more people took off his mask, a smirk on his face as he looked back at him. "Why? Do you want to?"

George burned into a blush, looking away. "No." He mumbled. "I just thought you did."

Dream laughed, as he sat down on a haybale, gesturing for George to take a seat next to him, and he did, sighing in relief for the first time that night.

He took deep breaths, leaning back and relishing in the fresh air as Dream laughed at him.

"You looked like you were about to choke." He said, causing George to look at him in shock.

"I did not."

He briefly chuckled, rolling his eyes. "I could tell you wanted to leave Georgie, it was so obvious."

George looked away from him, pouting. Dream had always been good at reading thoughts like this, especially his. He didn't exactly like parties, and he wasn't really one to go to celebrations a lot.

Normally he would've been completely fine with it, but the thing was he didn't even know most of the people there. Dream, Sapnap, and almost everyone else in the room had been trapped together

for months, but George didn't even know the names of anyone besides his friends.

So the atmosphere felt slightly overwhelming to him, a bit awkward and out of place.

Which is why he felt so relieved to be back outside alone, next to his best friend.

And of course it was Dream to drag him out of that situation.

He chuckled a bit. "Do you think anyone noticed?" He asked, slightly stretching, finally being relieved of the crowd.

"No, and I know you didn't want anyone to." Dream replied, leaning back, eyeing his friend.

"Which is why I tried pulling you out of there with the excuse we were going to dance, but you seemed pretty against the idea."

George smiled, slightly disappointed, as his expression shifted back into a fake frown. "Well how was I supposed to know that?"

"I winked at you!" Dream countered back, not a single drop of sarcasm in his voice. "Isn't winking like a universal language, I'm pretty sure they still do that in the UK."

He made it sound like it was so obvious, like George was the dumb one. But instead, he just sat there dumbfounded at his friend's stupidity, before a stifled laugh followed suit.

Dream watched him hold in his giggles, tilting his head. "What's so funny?"

But George could barely respond, too distracted from his bubbling laughter. Instead he picked up Dream's mask from his hands, holding it over his face before winking himself.

But his friend only sat there staring at him with no idea what he was doing, before being interrupted by another giggle. "I just winked, Dream."

And as he placed down the mask on his lap, Dream's expression didn't change.

"Oh."

They sat in silence, George trying desperately not to laugh while Dream kept his eyes on the ground. It didn't last long though, with Dream breaking into a wheeze as George finally cracked, unable to keep it in.

"Oh my god, I'm so fucking stupid!" Dream laughed, barely able to get the words through his wheezing.

"The biggest idiot I've ever met." George agreed, as they both continued to laugh their hearts out.

This was so much better than being in that suffocating hall, Dream's company was so much better than that of 2000 people.

His smile didn't die down as he looked back at his friend, still cracking up at his stupidity as George rolled his eyes at him.

He scoffed, looking away. "I actually thought you wanted to dance with me." George admitted, as Dream quieted down, still smiling.

God, George loved that smile.

"You did?" Dream asked with a smug look on his face.

George couldn't really tell where that smugness was coming from, but he ignored it, slowly nodding as Dream's expression shifted into a smirk.

"So that means you wanted to."

"Wanted to what?" George asked, Dream's expression worrying him.

"You said yes." He continued, tilting his head at him. "You wanted to dance with me."

George felt his face heat up again, as he quickly looked away from him. He couldn't be seen, it was night time, and yet he covered his face anyways.

"You forced me to, and besides you also said it wasn't a date."

"But you still said yes." Dream countered, still smirking, "you didn't have to do that."

God, he hated that smirk, and yet at the same time he found himself drawn towards it, his friend's dimples somehow making him feel all giddy inside.

It made him miss his excuses.

"So?"

"I really only thought you agreed because you knew I was taking you back out here." Dream explained. "I thought you saw me winking."

"Hah, I definitely did not see you wink, idiot."

Dream rolled his eyes. "Yeah I know that now." He sighed, leaning slightly closer to punch him in the shoulder. "It's just if I knew you actually said yes, I would have just taken you to go actual dancing instead."

"Really, you wanted to dance with me too?" George asked, almost imitating Dream's expression from earlier. Dream didn't shy away like George did though, instead grabbing his hand and placing it to his chest.

"Of course I did, Georgie." He replied, looking back at him with that same expression. "Who wouldn't want to dance with you?"

George, laughed, pulling away his hand.

Dream was so indescribably stupid, he was surprised he wasn't used to it yet.

And even then with a joke like that, it still managed to make George's heart skip a beat.

Even if it was just another one of his friend's teasing jokes, it still managed to make him feel the way it always did.

Happy, appreciated, helplessly in love.

He really missed his excuses.

"Too bad we don't get to dance anymore then." George said, shrugging it off and looking away.

And yet he felt so disappointed by it.

Because in all honesty, he wanted to dance with Dream.

He wanted to be that close, he wanted that feeling of warmth when he was near him, he wanted to be forced to cooperate with him in order to follow the flow of the beat and dance to the music.

He hated knowing that he wanted that, he absolutely despised that feeling.

Because this was all probably a joke, Dream probably didn't mean anything real with his half-flirtatious comments and silly words.

And yet it still managed to make George's heart jump, it still managed to make him feel so longing, so happy.

He hated that. It's what he was afraid of.

Afraid of getting too attached, and then having to throw it all behind him.

"You owe me for getting you out of that though." Dream countered back. "I could have shoved you into a dance with me, but I didn't."

"No, because you didn't know I was actually saying yes to dancing rather than escaping." George replied. "And also because you thought I saw you wink."

"Could you stop bringing that up?" Dream pleaded, as George smugly looked back at him.

"No."

He chuckled, rolling his eyes at him. "You're the worst. And now I missed my chance to dance with you."

"Like I said, too bad." George teased, rubbing it in his face. At the same time he was technically rubbing it in his own face too, so this was basically a lose-lose situation for both of them.

"But I could have just forced you to dance with me anyways."

"Could have, but you didn't"

Dream leaned in closer, almost whimpering, borderline whining. "Exactly what you said, I didn't."

George smiled, only leaning closer. "Because you're a decent human being, Dream. You shouldn't."

"I'm a decent human being? Gee thanks Georgie!" Dream said, playfully putting his hand on his chest.

"You're so stupid." George retorted, but his voice was dripping in sarcasm, and his smile was brighter than ever.

For a while, Dream didn't respond. He only let out small giggles, while George smiled at him. A disapproving smile because of how dumb Dream was, but a happy smile nonetheless.

And he had no idea how much Dream adored it.

"Oh come on, George." He said, causing his friend to just roll his eyes at him and look away.

"Come on what??"

Dream laughed again, causing George to wonder how the fuck he was still laughing, why he was so amused with the whole situation.

He didn't mind it though, Dream was cute anyways so he'd let it be.

God, he missed his excuses.

"How about this?" Dream said. "You promise to dance with me in the future."

George furrowed his eyebrows, shooting his friend a look. "Huh, why the fuck would I agree to that?"

But Dream only chuckled, again, showing off his smile. "Because I didn't force you to dance with me when I had the chance." He argued. "And I don't know, you could look forward to it if we live through the next fight or something."

"And why would I look forward to it?" George asked back, doing his best, and failing, to hold in his grin.

"Because you said yes, you *wanted* to dance with me Georgie." Dream said, as George laughed at the nickname.

"I said yes because I was peer pressured by you and Bad." He explained. "I didn't actually want to dance with you idiot, I was forced."

That was a lie, and deep down, George knew it.

But maybe he was fine with telling little lies like that to himself, just the small ones. Maybe those were still okay.

And Dream's face seemingly faltered for a second into an emotion George couldn't quite explain. It was quickly replaced once again by his confident smirk, but it almost seemed different from the one before. Slightly more forced.

"Fine, so *I* could look forward to it." Dream corrected himself, causing George to lightly snicker in response. "Come on, just one dance?"

George laughed, smiling back at him. "Fine. One day, when we're completely alone, we can do one single dance."

Dream's smile brightened once again, causing George's heart to skip a beat once more.

"And that's a promise?"

He sighed laughing to himself.

God, Dream was so fucking stupid.

And yet that stupidity was enough to make his heart leap, it was always enough. It was more than enough.

"Promise."

"Good." Dream said, ending their conversation there.

The two just sat next to each other as time passed, smiling to themselves as they looked towards the sky.

George took quick glances at his friend, many actually, knowing that soon enough that beautiful face of his would be covered up again.

It was peaceful, quiet, away from the crowd, and in some strange way fulfilling.

It was perfect, and George wouldn't have it any other way.

Dream sighed again, before looking back at his friend. "You know, I actually can't believe we won that." He said. "I genuinely thought we were so fucked."

"I think we all did." George replied back, watching as Dream fell back onto the hay bales, lying down on them and keeping his eyes on the stars above.

And George didn't follow after, content with just watching Dream while sitting up next to him.

"But we did it, huh?"

George smiled too, looking him in the eyes. "Yeah, we really did."

"And with more than enough blaze rods too!" Dream exclaimed, nearly yelling as the realization hit him. "We did it."

"Yeah, we really did." George repeated, his smile softening as he watched Dream ramble, pure joy on his face.

"Sorry, I don't think I fully processed it yet." Dream admitted, running a hand through his hair.

"I've been stuck here for so long, I almost feel like it just wasn't possible, that it would never happen. I felt like I was chasing something, chasing a dream." He continued with a laugh. "I was half sure we were all just going to die, and get stuck here forever."

George sent him a look of pity, his eyes moving to glance at the bustling hall behind them.

All the players there were feeling the same thing, pure and utter relief.

It was the first thing that could be called a real step. A real step closer to being free.

Everyone just seemed so used to this, it almost became so normal to the point that winning was just viewed as surreal, impossible.

And yet they did it. After months and months of fighting and death, they actually did it.

That meant it was, in fact, possible. That meant they weren't just chasing an impossible goal.

It meant that freedom was in their reach, in sight, it was achievable.

They could beat the game, they could free the end.

"I didn't actually think we would do it." Dream laughed. "It was all big baby talk I was faking to make people feel better."

"Big baby talk?" George repeated, holding in his chuckles, while Dream just responded with a light punch.

His friend looked away for a bit, staring at the stars before staring back at George.

"But I'm glad I got to share it with you, this victory I mean." He said, briefly closing his eyes, smiling at his friend. "I'm glad you're here George."

"Do you mean it?" He asked, as Dream gave him a quick nod.

"Yeah, I do, I really do."

He smiled again, lying back on the hay bales, next to Dream. "Well, I'm glad I'm here too."

"Why though?"

George shot him a weird look, as Dream followed it up with a light hearted laugh. "What do you mean why?"

"Like why would you like being in this crazy place?" He said, looking back at him. "You almost died like twice, plus you keep getting hurt, and yet you're happy to be here?"

George just tilted his head, looking towards the sky. He didn't really have a good response to that, for all he knew, Dream was right.

He'd been through a lot here. He had nearly died for one thing, and being trapped within the game imposed a fear on him, one that followed him wherever he went.

Fear of death. Fear of being stuck in this game forever and losing the people he cared about. Of losing Dream, because God knows he didn't want that to happen again.

He hated the pain, he hated their circumstances. They were stuck in a cycle of death on repeat, and nothing about that was changing.

And yet George had no regrets coming here, not in the slightest. Not anymore.

"I don't know really." He answered briefly before looking once more at his friend. Dream had the prettiest piss-yellow eyes. "But I'm glad I'm here, I wouldn't have it any other way."

"If you had the chance to go back and just *not* log on, would you?" Dream asked again.

George would have made a joke about how he most definitely would, how this place sucked more than anything. But he chose not to, being able to read the mood coming from his friend.

And yet he hated the question. It was just a lose-lose situation for him.

If he said yes, Dream would apologize for not protecting him enough. If he said no, he'd feel guilty about keeping him away, for making that deal with Mojang.

So there really was no right answer.

No right answer but the truth.

George frowned, before letting out a sigh. "I guess I wouldn't."

"Then I really shouldn't have kept you out of it, huh?" Dream said, looking away with a. "Sorry about that, again. That was selfish."

"I guessed you would say that, you know?" George replied, holding in a laugh.

His expression changed back into a careless smile. "Really?"

"Yeah, you're predictable as fuck Dream." He joked back, causing his friend to just scoff at him.

He really wasn't, Dream really wasn't all that easy to read.

And yet George never failed to, despite his various attempts to hide his emotions, to keep other people from reading him, George still could.

He knew Dream better than anyone, he was Dream's best friend.

"But I forgive you Dream, I promise I do." He said, causing Dream to crack up into a smile.

He stayed quiet for a bit, before leaning slightly closer to George. "Thanks." He replied briefly. "I'm glad I got stuck with you instead of someone a little less forgiving. Cough cough, Sapnap."

George laughed, smiling back at him. "Duh, I'm way better than him."

Dream laughed back, before he sat back up, this time looking at George who stayed lying down, closing his eyes. "I still don't get why you're happy in here though." Dream continued on. "Like, what is there for you here."

George took a deep breath, keeping his eyes on the stars up above him.

If he was being honest with himself, he probably already knew the answer, but like many things, he wasn't willing to admit it to himself.

That was the hard part, not figuring things out, but rather accepting them.

He didn't want to accept this.

"I guess just being able to actually do something, you know?" He sighed, subconsciously moving closer to his friend. "Like, having to just watch it all unfold was probably just as scary, if not worse since I couldn't really do anything."

Dream just nodded, that guilt obviously still there. George didn't see it though, his eyes still focused on the stars. They were beautiful, and they really did remind him of someone. "And maybe there's one more reason." He continued, rambling on.

"Hm?" Dream mumbled, causing George to look back at him. "And what is it?"

For a while he didn't answer. George just closed his eyes, reaching his hands towards the sky like a child, as if trying to distract himself.

He knew what it was, and yet he found himself wishing he could ignore it.

Again, he missed his excuses.

But as George took another glance at his friend, his eyes carefully searching his friend's face for an answer, he smiled again, that same feeling finding its way back to him.

Well, at least he was sure of his answer now.

It was Dream, his answer was Dream.

The reason he joined in the first place, the reason he was so relieved to be here. The reason he

risked everything, the person he sacrificed everything for.

It's always been Dream.

But that was something he was going to be keeping to himself.

"Not telling you, idiot."

And he would keep lying like this for as long as he had to, to preserve this friendship that meant so much to him.

It was safer that way, their friendship safer that way. He was not willing to take risks. Not with this.

Not with Dream.

Not if that meant even the slightest chance of losing him.

Chapter End Notes

OKAY SO YEAH DISCORD SERVER IS HERE:

<https://discord.gg/SAUNqgh>

I cant link the text properly, idk why so this will have to do i guess. If it doesnt work just ask for it in the comments, it should work i hope idrk

You can talk to me on here, and Ill post schedule changes etc :)

Also this chapter is ew, i dont like any chapters anymore at this point

End Notes

New to ao3 so yep. Ik this sort of stuff has been done before but I wanted to test it out in a multiplayer based setting.

According to ao3 statistics only a small percentage of readers actually leave a kudos, so if you enjoyed be sure to do so, its free (and you can't actually unkudos but we don't talk about that, now do we?).

Also, if anyone mentioned in this expresses any sort of discomfort, it will be taken down immediately. Remember dnf is just for fun.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!

